

# VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR MEADOWOOD PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL LOG No.: ER 04-02-004, GPA 04-002, SPA 04-001, TM 5354  
RPL<sup>2</sup>, R04-004, S04-005, S04-006, AND S04-007

APRIL 20, 2007, REVISED APRIL 26, 2009

**PREPARED FOR:**

*County of San Diego*  
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B  
San Diego, CA 92123

**APPLICANT:**

*Pardee Homes*  
12626 High Bluff Drive  
San Diego, CA 92130

**PREPARED BY:**

---

*Adam Gevanthor, RLA #3393, exp 4/09*

***Development Design Services &  
GraphicAccess, Inc.***

2583 Via Merano  
Del Mar, CA 92014  
858.793.5450 x2  
&

***Helix Environmental Planning, Inc.***

7578 El Cajon Boulevard, Suite 200  
La Mesa, CA 91941  
619.462.1515

**PREPARED FOR:**

***RECON Environmental, Inc.***  
1927 Fifth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101  
619.308.9333

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	A. STUDY PURPOSE .....	3
	B. PROJECT LOCATION .....	3
	C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION .....	3
	D. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING .....	6
	E. PROJECT SITE VISIBILITY .....	12
	F. APPLICABLE POLICIES AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS .....	15
<b>III.</b>	<b>VISUAL IMPACT EVALUATION .....</b>	<b>31</b>
	A. THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE .....	31
	B. GUIDELINE SOURCES .....	31
	C. ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY .....	32
	D. ANALYSIS OF PROJECT EFFECTS AND DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE .....	33
	E. CONCLUSIONS .....	59
<b>IV.</b>	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>LIST OF PREPARERS .....</b>	<b>62</b>

## EXHIBIT LIST

<b>FIGURE 1 -</b>	REGIONAL LOCATION .....	18
<b>FIGURE 2 -</b>	AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH & SURROUNDING LAND USES .....	19
<b>FIGURE 3 -</b>	LAND USE PLAN .....	20
<b>FIGURE 4 -</b>	SITE PLAN .....	21
<b>FIGURE 5 -</b>	FIRE PROTECTION PLAN .....	22
<b>FIGURE 6 -</b>	GENERALIZED VIEWSHED .....	23
<b>FIGURE 7 -</b>	EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER UNITS .....	24
<b>FIGURE 8 -</b>	VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS A & B .....	25
<b>FIGURE 9 -</b>	VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS C & D .....	26
<b>FIGURE 10 -</b>	VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS E & F .....	27
<b>FIGURE 11 -</b>	VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS G & H .....	28
<b>FIGURE 12 -</b>	VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS I & J .....	29
<b>FIGURE 13 -</b>	VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS K & L .....	30
<b>FIGURE 14 -</b>	CROSS SECTIONS A & B .....	62
<b>FIGURE 15 -</b>	CROSS SECTIONS D & E .....	63
<b>FIGURE 16 -</b>	CROSS SECTIONS E & F .....	64
<b>FIGURE 17 -</b>	INTERSTATE 15 PROJECT VISIBILITY .....	65
<b>FIGURE 18 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS .....	66
<b>FIGURE 19 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 1 & 2 .....	67
<b>FIGURE 20 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 2 .....	68
<b>FIGURE 21 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 3 & 4 .....	69
<b>FIGURE 22 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 3 .....	70
<b>FIGURE 23 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 5 & 6 .....	71
<b>FIGURE 24 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 6 .....	72
<b>FIGURE 25 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 7 & 8 .....	73
<b>FIGURE 26 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 7 .....	74
<b>FIGURE 27 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 9 & 10 .....	75
<b>FIGURE 28 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 9 .....	76
<b>FIGURE 29 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 11 & 12 .....	77
<b>FIGURE 30 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 13 & 14 .....	78
<b>FIGURE 31 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 15 & 16 .....	79
<b>FIGURE 32 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 15 .....	80
<b>FIGURE 33 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 17 & 18 .....	81
<b>FIGURE 34 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 19 & 20 .....	82
<b>FIGURE 35 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 19 .....	83
<b>FIGURE 36 -</b>	KEY OBSERVATION POINTS 21 & 22 .....	84
<b>FIGURE 37 -</b>	PHOTO SIMULATION OF KOP 37 .....	85
<b>FIGURE 38 -</b>	STEEP SLOPES .....	86
<b>FIGURE 39 -</b>	RPO ENCROACHMENT .....	87
<b>FIGURE 40 -</b>	CUT & FILL .....	88
<b>FIGURE 41 -</b>	SLOPE HEIGHTS .....	89
<b>FIGURE 42 -</b>	OPEN SPACE PLAN .....	90
<b>FIGURE 43 -</b>	COUNTY CUMULATIVE PROJECTS .....	91

## TABLE LIST

<b>TABLE 1 -</b>	CUMULATIVELY CONSIDERABLE PROJECTS .....	52
------------------	--	----

## I. Summary of Findings

The following visual impacts are anticipated as a result of implementation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment.

1) The Visual Quality of the viewshed is anticipated to be impacted significantly due to major changes to the pattern character of the site as a result of the project. These changes will prominently contrast with the visual setting and will be seen by a significant number of visual receptors that are sensitive to visual changes. The areas affected by these changes are considered to be of moderate to high visual quality. **This significant impact would be reduced to below a level of significance with the incorporation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment Guidelines and design review process.**

2) Manufactured slopes in excess of 100 feet, created by the project, will have a significant impact on the quality of landforms within the project viewshed. These angular graded slopes will contrast with the existing undulating natural landform of the area, will be visible to a large number of viewers that are sensitive to change, and will be affecting landforms that are intact, natural and of a high visual quality. **This impact would be reduced to below a level of significance with the incorporation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment Guidelines and design review process.**

3) The existing community character of the valley will be significantly changed due to the density and arrangement of buildings and forms associated with the project, and due to the introduction of new materials and colors associated with suburban development. This will contrast with the rural agricultural and natural open space that currently dominates the project viewshed. This change will be visible to a large number of viewers that will be sensitive to this type of change. The changes will affect the existing unique character of an area that is moderately intact and harmonious. **This impact would be reduced to below a level of significance with the incorporation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment Guidelines and design review process.**

4) Light and glare impacts, associated with the project, are not considered to be significant. Due to the exclusion of lighting from almost 50 percent of the project comprising the open space and agricultural lots, and the existence of lighting west of the freeway within the project viewshed, introduced night lighting will not become a dominant element in the nighttime views of the valley. **Light and glare impacts are not anticipated to substantially contrast with existing conditions and therefore will not result in a significant adverse visual effect.**



5) **No adverse impacts to existing public views are expected.** No removal of public views will occur and no blocking of public view corridors are anticipated. No blocking of viewing corridors will occur and the changes to the viewing scene would not dominate the character of the scene. **A less than significant impact is expected.**

6) Short-term visible construction activities would contrast with existing conditions due to removal of existing vegetation and the introduction of new, visually dominant elements. **While temporary in nature and addressed through project design landscaping over the long-term, adverse visual impacts associated with construction activities would be significant but short term.**

7) **Significant cumulative visual impacts are anticipated when considering the project in conjunction with other cumulatively considerable projects** such as the adjacent Campus Park, Campus Park West and neighboring Palomar Community College campus. These visual changes associated with these projects are expected to combine to create dominant visual elements within the project viewshed. **This impact is considered to be significant and unmitigable.**

## II. Introduction

### A. Study Purpose

The following Visual Impact Assessment was prepared for the proposed Meadowood project. This report provides the basis for the analysis summarized in Subchapter 2.1 of the project EIR.

This analysis is based on the project description found in Chapter 1.0 of the EIR and the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment and General Plan Amendment Report prepared by Latitude 33 Planning & Engineering and revised by Rick Engineering (Rick Engineering; 2009). Project elements applicable to aesthetics review such as architecture, landscape architecture, fire management, lighting, and grading are summarized below.

### B. Project Location

The Project site is located in the unincorporated community of Fallbrook in northern San Diego County, approximately 6 miles southeast of the downtown area of Fallbrook, northeast of the Interstate 15 and State Route 76 Interchange (see Regional Location, Figure 1). The irregularly shaped 389.5-acre Project site is approximately 1,213 feet across (east-west) at its widest point and 2,400 feet long from the northern to southern boundaries. State Route 76 (SR 76) and Rosemary's Mountain border the project to the south and the project known as Campus Park borders the project to the west. Undeveloped land and cultivated groves lie to the north and cultivated groves and open space are located to the east (see Aerial Photo and Surrounding Land Uses, Figure 2).

### C. Project Description

The project proposes on-site construction of a mixed-use community consisting of 886<sup>1</sup> single family and multi-family homes, elementary school, neighborhood park, pocket parks, and 5.9 miles of trails. The project also includes the permanent conservation of 120.7 acres of sensitive biological habitat and 49.3 acres of existing agricultural lands containing citrus and avocado groves (see Land Use Plan, Figure 3). The infrastructure necessary to support the development would include on- and off-site roadways, sewer and water facilities including an on-site wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), and storm drains. The Specific Plan Amendment contains goals and policies to ensure that the proposed land uses are compatible with the character of adjacent, existing and proposed uses and in conformance with the proposed North County Multiple Species Conservation Plan to which the Proposed Project will contribute 115.6 acres.

Access to the site will be provided via a north-south boulevard named Horse Ranch Creek Road which will extend north from SR 76 (Pala Road) and connect to Pankey Road, which then connects to Stewart Canyon Road. A paved fire access road will be provided via Pala Mesa

---

<sup>1</sup> The actual proposed dwelling unit number is  $886-42=844$ , because the elementary school is the included use for Planning Area 2. The 42 units are intended to designate a land use for the parcel if the school district decides not to use the land.

Drive, which will connect with Horse Ranch Creek Road via a connector road known as Street R, from Old Highway 395 west of I-15 via an existing, currently unused bridge. The internal road system was developed jointly with the owners of the Campus Park and Campus Park West Projects to ensure adequate circulation through all three projects.

A paved Fire Access Road, which varies in width from 20' - 24', would extend northeasterly from Street E to Rice Canyon Road. The elevation of the road would range from approximately 520 at the cul-de-sac to a peak elevation of 740 at the ridge with manufactured slopes, some exceeding 60 feet in height.

Single family residential housing, with a gross density of approximately 2.7 dwelling units per acre, will be located in the northern and eastern portions of the property along residential streets designed to follow the contours of the existing topography. The average residential lot size is 6,000 square feet; however most lots would exceed this, especially those located on sloped areas and adjacent to the agricultural buffer (see Site Plan, Figure 4).

The architectural character as detailed in the Fallbrook Design Guidelines would be incorporated into the design of Meadowood. The buildings would be limited to two stories and a 35-foot maximum height limit. The roof lines, shadow patterns, and architectural detailing would be offset to provide relief and visual contrast in accordance with Architectural Guidelines prepared for the project (see Appendix 2, Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment). This will minimize the appearance of building massing. The development would also incorporate natural features as design elements; such as natural open space, existing trees, and rolling topography. Landscaping within the Meadowood project has been designed to reflect the Fallbrook region which consists of gray-green native plantings contrasting with verdant groves, and dense riparian oak woodlands. Existing citrus and avocado groves will be conserved where possible and will contain an under-story of mulch and/or grasslands. Slope plantings will consist of fast growing plant materials that provide seasonal interest and beauty. Existing mature native vegetation will be conserved where feasible and new native vegetation will be utilized whenever possible to maintain the rural Fallbrook character. Landscaping will be used to provide transitions between the development and surrounding open space areas, screen and buffer edges of development from view, screen and soften manufactured slopes, and provide a buffer between neighborhoods.

Street plantings along primary and secondary theme roads will include widened landscape parkways containing large canopy shade trees such as *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak), *Quercus virginiana* (Southern Live Oak), *Liquidambar styraciflua* (Sweet Gum), *Koeireuteria bipinnata* (Chinese flame tree), *Platanus acerifolia* (London Plane Tree) and *Platanus racemosa* (California sycamore). Existing groves shall be conserved along roadway edges where possible. Indigenous plant material will be used within planted parkways. Special ornamental trees will be used at key entry nodes along streets and will include *Schinus molle* (California Pepper), *Prosopis velutina* (Arizona Mesquite), *Parkinsonia aculeate* (Mexican Palo Verde), *Koeireuteria bipinnata* (Chinese flame tree) and *Cassia Leptophylla* (Gold Medallion Tree).

The parkway landscape treatment along Pala Road will consist of a soft-surface regional trail, naturalizing shrubs, groundcover, and a row of

broad canopy street trees. This will provide a vegetative buffer that will provide partial screening of proposed sound barriers<sup>3</sup>, the WWTP, and adjacent multi-family development. This landscape treatment is “designed to capture the rustic character and beauty of the region” according to Landscape Plans prepared for the proposed Project by the Office of James Burnett.

Brush management would be provided for all sensitive buffer areas (see Fire Protection Plan, Figure 5). The landscape design for these areas shall follow *the Fire Protection Plan for the Meadowood Project* prepared by Firewise 2000, Inc.

All development will comply with the county’s Dark Sky Ordinance.

Multi-family housing would be located on the topographically lower and more level portions of the site and limited to two stories and a 35-foot maximum height limit. The roof lines, shadow patterns, and architectural detailing have been offset to provide relief and visual contrast. This will minimize the appearance of building massing. The project would accommodate pedestrian connections between homes, parks, school, and trails. A multi-use trail would be located along Horse Ranch Creek Road and Pala Road and pedestrian trails are located within the project (see Site Plan, Figure 4).

Non-residential buildings would have no strict design requirements but are limited to two stories and a 35-foot height limit.

Development within Meadowood would be subject to the “B” designator in accordance with the Fallbrook Community Plan and I-15 Corridor Plan. This means that design proposals require Site Plan review for any development permit. The intent of the “B” designator is to address man-made and natural features which affect the scenic quality of the Fallbrook Community and the I-15 Corridor area. This will help to ensure that every new development carefully considers the community context in which it takes place and make a conscientious effort to develop a compatible relationship to the natural setting, neighboring properties and community design goals.

The southern project boundary is currently located within the SR 76 alignment. The proposed Project will be required to pay into the Traffic Impact Fee Program - or TIF - to help fund the SR 76 improvements. SR 76 will be realigned to a location south of the proposed Project and widened to accommodate project-generated and regional-wide traffic. The proposed Project also includes off-site road and utility improvements.

Three water storage tanks are proposed for a location approximately midway between the northern and southern project limits, along a small portion of the ridgeline, east of the upper groves. Two of the tanks are 133-feet in diameter, 32-feet in height and located at an elevation of 764’ AMSL. The third tank would be 75-feet in diameter, 24-feet in height, and located at an elevation of 762’ AMSL. A road to service the tanks will be constructed from the terminus of Street A and will wind its way north to the tanks (see Site Plan, Figure 4).

---

<sup>3</sup> To the extent feasible, a combination of walls and berming will be provided for sound attenuation with a maximum height of 6’. In circumstances where this is not feasible, wall heights will be constructed consistent with the mitigation measures of the EIR and may exceed this height.

An on-site wastewater treatment plant would be located along the southern Project boundary adjacent to the Pala Road corridor. This facility would be approximately 2 acres in size and consists of operations buildings, parking, internal circulation, and wet weather ponds. This facility would be approximately 10 feet above the adjacent Pala Road parkway elevation and will be partially screened from view by a six foot sound barrier, and row of street trees. This area would be approximately 120 feet deep, north to south, and serves as a buffer between PA 1 and Pala Road.

## **D. Environmental Setting**

This section addresses the existing setting and visual conditions in the area, and includes photographs of the site. This section also includes a discussion of the project viewshed, as well as the numbers of viewers in the area, and the location, type and frequency of views. The existing visual and landform setting is based on an analysis of photographs, topographic mapping, aerial photographs, reference document reviews, and documented on- and off-site land uses, as well as site reconnaissance.

### **1. Meadowood Project Site**

#### **a. Topography**

The topography of the site generally slopes downward to the south and west, toward Horse Ranch Creek, which extends along the western boundary of the adjacent Campus Park project and ultimately feeds in to the San Luis Rey River located to the south. The southern and western central portions of the site are relatively flat. Topography is more varied in the northern and eastern portions of the site where slopes comprising the base of the Monserate Mountains slope upward to the north and east and contain canyons that transect the hills in a northeast/southwest and east/west direction, directing drainage towards Horse Ranch Creek. Elevations on-site range from approximately 265 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) at the southern edge of the site, to approximately 898 feet AMSL at the projects highest point, a ridgeline of the Monserate Mountains, located in the northeastern portion of the site (see Figure 6, Generalized Viewshed).

#### **b. Site Land Uses**

Currently, nearly 54% of the Meadowood site is in agricultural production with citrus and avocado groves. There are 13 buildings, of which six are historic but not significant. These are scattered throughout the site and used as homes, associated sheds, and agricultural buildings. A small southern portion of the property supports minor passive agriculture (grazing) activities. A private road provides access to the residences.

### c. Vegetation

Agriculture dominates the site with groves of citrus and avocado occurring on the lower and middle portions of the hillsides located on the eastern portion of the project property.

The steep upper south- and west-facing slopes, including the upper ridgelines located above the groves, primarily consist of coastal sage scrub and mixed chaparral.

The lower, flatter portions of the site appear to have been disturbed by grazing and other agricultural activities and are dominated by non-native grasslands.

Some Coast Live Oak Woodland is visible on the steep slopes located in the eastern portion of the property.

### d. Outdoor Lighting

The Project site currently has very low levels of exterior lighting, due to the existence of only several residences and buildings on the property. Minimal lighting is provided, limited to that needed for safety. This lighting is visible from I-15 and is generally the only lighting, along with that associated with the adjoining Campus Park property that is visible to the east of the interstate at night between the Stewart Canyon Road under-crossing and SR 76.

### e. Baseline Visual Environment

#### *Visual Character*

Visual effects associated with a project are based on changes to the existing visual environment. Our understanding of these effects is based on the visual character of objects and the relationships between them, within the context of the greater visual setting; this is also referred to as a project's viewshed.

Specific impacts to this viewshed are determined by defining the visual quality of a landscape and then comparing it to a construction and post construction condition. This assessment of visual character is descriptive and distinguishes at least two levels of attributes: pattern elements and pattern character.

Visual *pattern elements* include an object's form, line, color, and texture and *pattern character* refers to the visual relationships between these elements. Differences in visual character are generally traced to four aspects of pattern character: dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity. For example, there is a great difference between the visual character of SR 76 and Interstate 15, although both may exhibit similar line, color, and texture.

The four aspects of pattern character are defined as follows:

- Dominance: Specific components in a landscape may be visually dominant because of position, extent, or contrast of basic pattern elements.
- Scale is the apparent size relationship between a landscape component and its surroundings; an object can be made to look smaller or larger in scale by manipulating its visual pattern elements.

- Visual diversity is a function of the number, variety, and intermixing of visual pattern elements.
- Continuity is the uninterrupted flow of pattern elements in a landscape and the maintenance of visual relationships between immediately connected or related landscape components.

We assess both the project and the project setting according to these attributes; if their visual character is similar, the visual compatibility of the project will be high. If the visual character of the project contrasts strongly with the visual character of its setting, its visual compatibility will generally be low.

#### *Visual Quality*

Aesthetics is not only concerned with the character of the visual experience, but also with its quality. The perception of quality is based upon a viewer's response to vividness, intactness, and unity occurring within the visual environment. These factors affect perceptual quality and are defined below.

- Vividness is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.
- Intactness is the visual integrity of the natural and man-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements.
- Unity is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole.

Areas with **High Visual Quality** are those where all three of these factors are high. Areas with **Moderate Visual Quality** are those where one of these factors is low. Areas with **Low Visual Quality** are those where two or more of these factors are low.

#### *Sensitive to Change*

Visual sensitivity is based on an area's ability to absorb changes in character and quality. Areas with a high sensitivity to change are those that are visually prominent, distinctive, contain a dominant visual character element, and have high visual quality. These are areas that would contrast to a great degree with a proposed improvement.

An area with moderate sensitivity to change would contain a several visual character elements that vary in form, line, color, and texture, and that is of moderate visual quality.

An area with low sensitivity to change are those that have many visual character elements that vary in form, line, color and texture, and is of low visual quality.

### Site Visual Characteristics

Visual character units are used to characterize areas of the site that have similar visual properties. They serve to define the baseline visual environment so that it may be compared to the construction and post construction conditions. This will aid in determining whether a project will result in physical changes that are incompatible with visual character or that will degrade the visual quality within the viewshed. Visual character units are also described with regard to their ability to absorb change. Visual character units are depicted on Figure 7 and described in the subsection that follows. Photographs providing a visual depiction of these character units are provided as Figures 8 through 13.

Photo A, Figure 8, depicts the **Upper Ridgeline** area which consists of the ridges of Monserate Mountain. The natural vegetation and ridgeline is undisturbed with the exception of a graded service road and water tank (tank not visible in photo A). Although there is some scarring with the service road and slight interruption to the ridgeline, the area is given a **high visual quality rating** and is considered **highly sensitivity to change** due to the prominence of the ridgeline forms and relative intactness of the patterns of native vegetation.

Photo B, Figure 8, depicts the **Saddle Ridge** landform that bridges the gap between Monserate Mountain and Rosemary's Mountain. This area contains verdant, visually intact, groves of avocados in the upper portions of the slopes and lighter-colored native vegetation and boulder outcrops towards the lower portions of the slopes. This creates visual diversity, especially when viewed in conjunction with the adjacent upper ridgelines of Monserate Mountain. While there is visual diversity, there are perceptible visual patterns which enhance the scenic qualities of the area which is why the area is given a **high visual quality rating**. Due to the steep landforms and relatively intact visual patterns the area is considered to have a **high sensitivity to change**.

Photos C and D, Figure 9, depicts the **Upper and Lower Grove** areas which include the citrus orchards located below the saddle ridge. These areas are characterized by rolling topography, dominant patterns of tree plantings interspersed with agricultural structures and access roads. While these areas are visually distinctive and moderately intact, they are similar to other visual elements within the project viewshed and are considered to have a **moderate visual quality rating**.

The **Upper Grove** is considered to have a high sensitivity to change given the dominant pattern character of the grove plantings. The **Lower Grove** area is considered to have a moderate sensitivity to change due to its visual diversity and visual similarity to other areas in the project viewshed.

Photo E, Figure 10, depicts the **Lower Meadow** which includes several residences and agricultural buildings. This area is characterized by rolling topography, non-native vegetation, and pasture land. Overhead utilities are clearly visible. As a result of the visual diversity, visual disturbances, and lack of prominent features, **the lower meadow is considered to have a moderate visual quality rating and a moderate sensitivity to change**.

Photo F, Figure 10, depicts **Rosemary's Mountain** which consists of a highly prominent and distinctive landform that rises to 992-feet and consists of steep slopes covered in native and non-native vegetation and



rock outcrops. This area is considered to have a **high visual quality rating** and **high sensitivity to change**.

Photo G, Figure 11, depicts the Northern Pasture which consists primarily of non-native grasslands and gently rolling topography and drainages. Given the lack of prominent visual features and lack of perceptible pattern elements **the visual quality is considered to be low**. The area, as a result of the visual consistency of the elements described above, **is considered to be moderately sensitive to change**.

Photo H, Figure 11, depicts the Roadside Riparian areas located adjacent to I-15. This area is characterized by riparian woodland containing native willows, oaks, and cottonwoods in conjunction with non-native Eucalyptus. This area is visually prominent but not visually distinctive or striking and **is considered to be of moderate visual quality and moderately sensitive to change**.

Photo I, Figure 12, depicts the large Riparian Corridor that extends from Pala Road to Interstate 15. This area is characterized by dense intact stands of riparian woodland that is visually distinctive and striking. It is therefore considered to be of **high visual quality and highly sensitive to change**.

Photo J, Figure 12, depicts the Farm House/Grove area which is characterized by residential structures, graded driveway, and non-native vegetation. The area is not memorable, intact, or visually unified in its appearance. It is visually similar to other active agricultural settings in the area and is considered to be of **low visual quality and have a low sensitivity to change**.

Photo K, Figure 13, depicts the Citrus Orchard located to the south of Pala Road. This area is characterized by a grove of trees that while visually prominent are similar in appearance to other groves in the viewshed. This area is considered to be of **moderate visual quality and have a moderate sensitivity to change** due to the dominance, and continuity of the pattern created by the grove planting.

Photo L, Figure 13, depicts the graded pasture defined as the Upper Meadow. This area is located east of Interstate 15 and north and south of Pala Roads and is characterized by graded grassland, overhead utilities and minor stands of native and non-native trees. **This area is considered to be of low visual quality and to have a low sensitivity to change** given the prior disturbance and low quality visual elements in view.

## 2. Project Vicinity

### a. Topography

The Project site is located at the edge of a narrow valley generally referred to as the I-15 corridor. The area surrounding the site is topographically varied. The Project site is bordered on the east and north by the Monserate Mountains and foothills, some of which is owned and managed by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy. These hills provide a background for most views to the site from the south and west. The highest point in the Monserate Mountain range is at 1,567 feet AMSL. A public trail maintained by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy and accessed via the northern extension of Pankey Road winds to the summit and provides views both to the east and to the west, encompassing the Project site (Site Plan, Figure 4). Neighboring peaks in this range step downward

to the south, with the lowest peak reaching a height of 814 feet AMSL. Rosemary's Mountain, a large rocky peak, reaches a height of 992 feet AMSL east of the southern boundary of the Project site, just north of the San Luis Rey River and SR 76.

The San Luis Rey River trends from the east toward the west within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of the southern extent of the Project site. South of the river, Lancaster Mountain rises to 1,485 feet AMSL, creating the southeastern boundary of the I-15 corridor valley. The southern boundary of the valley consists of a series of hills generally paralleling the river. I-15 extends north/south through these hills. At the freeway's southern summit within the viewshed, West Lilac Road spans the hills over the highway with a visually prominent bridge.

West of the Project site and I-15, another north/south trending series of peaks creates the valley's western boundary. The highest among these peaks rises to approximately 929 feet AMSL. I-15 climbs in elevation to the north, as the Monserate Mountain range and the range west of the interstate come together (see Generalized Viewshed, Figure 6).

#### **b. Land Uses**

Some of the largely undeveloped Monserate Mountains are located within a resource conservation area owned and managed by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy. Three water tanks are located east of the Project site in these mountains, and a service road, also serving as a recreational trail, winds along the mountain slopes, providing access to the tank and ridgeline. Scarring associated with this access road is visible. Passive agriculture is the main land use west of the Project site (between the property boundary and the I-15).

Open space also exists south of the Project site, associated with the San Luis Rey River. The river is identified as a Resource Conservation Area in the San Diego County General Plan. The river "includes large patches of Riparian woodland vegetation and known locations for the Stephens' kangaroo rat which is listed as rare and protected by the State of California."

The primary land use surrounding the Project site, besides agriculture, is residential. Residential development includes a subdivision of single-story, single family homes south of the river and the Project site. Large, estate style single family residential uses on large lots are visibly located among the hills west of the Project site and I-15. Landscaped yards, small-scale agricultural facilities (e.g. nurseries, and citrus or avocado groves), varied topography transected by winding roads, and mature trees make up the visual character of the area. Some native vegetation and undeveloped areas are scattered among these hills. The Beck Reservoir and the Engle Family Preserve, owned by Fallbrook Land Conservancy, are also in this area.

The Pala Mesa Resort, a private resort with a golf course, is located at the bottom of the hills to the west side of the I-15, west of the Project site. A gas station, parking lot, and hotel and restaurant, are visually prominent in the vicinity of the northwest quadrant of the I-15/SR 76 interchange.

No existing public parks or recreation areas other than Monserate Mountain trail, which extends to the north and northeast, exist near the Project site. A trail owned and maintained by the Fallbrook Land

Conservancy within the Engle Family Preserve is located near the top of the hills paralleling I-15 to the west. This trail is accessed from Sumac Road and overlooks the I-15 corridor and much of the Project site. A future Community Pathway is proposed along Pala Road, south of the southerly project boundary.

An Aerial Photograph and Surrounding Land Uses, Figure 2, provides a graphic location of the areas discussed above.

### **c. Outdoor Lighting**

The project vicinity has low and moderate levels of exterior lighting, concentrated at major intersections, the commercial areas, the Pala Mesa Resort, surrounding residential areas, and the Rancho Viejo subdivision which is located to the south of SR 76. This lighting is visible from I-15 within the project viewshed.

## **E. Project Site Visibility**

### **1. Project Viewshed**

A “viewshed” is an analytical tool used to aid in the identification of views that could be affected by a potential project. The viewshed is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which the project is likely to be seen, based on topography and land use patterns. The viewshed boundary for the proposed Project was determined through the analysis of aerial photographs and topographic maps, and was field verified by the project analyst. Variations between potential visibility to the site and actual possible views are discussed in the text below. The viewshed boundary represents the geographic limits for this visual assessment.

The Generalized Viewshed exhibit, provided as Figure 6, illustrates the generalized project viewshed on a topographic base. The project viewshed is generally confined to the areas located within the ridgelines that surround the I-15 corridor and that define the San Luis Rey River valley. The ridgelines of the Monserate Mountains comprise the eastern viewshed boundary while the hillsides west of I-15 delineate the western viewshed boundary. The southern and northern viewshed boundaries are defined by the peaks spanned by the West Lilac Road Bridge to the south and the hills leading upward to Mission Road to the north. Smaller peaks and hillsides and the depression of the river valley create areas within these defined boundaries from which views to the Project site are shielded.

## **2. Existing Viewer Sensitivity**

### **a. Motorists**

The visual experience of motorists traveling on I-15 is varied, and in the area of the Project site, views primarily include agriculture and open space areas, but also include residences and businesses located to the south and west of Project site. The highway is heavily traveled; being the main north-south route between Riverside County and San Diego, and provides scenic views to tens of thousands of motorists each day. The southern half of the project is located as much as 2,900 feet east of I-15, and is not generally visible from the highway. Vegetation and topography restrict views to the southern portion of the Project site from I-15 (Section A, Figure 14). The northern half of the Project site is located as much as 3,036 feet east of I-15 but is more visible as it comprises the higher elevated portions of the site as depicted in Cross Sections C & D, Figure 15. Views toward the Project site are available to motorists traveling along I-15 (some open and some restricted) for several minutes. Available views of the project are graphically depicted on Figure 17, Interstate 15 Project Visibility.

Portions of the Project site are visible from Old Highway 395 (roughly paralleling I-15 to the west) and from SR 76 near the southern boundary of the Project site. Views from SR 76 and Old Highway 395 are brief and transitory due to travel speeds combined with the presence of view blocking foreground vegetation and fencing located within portions of the I-15 right-of-way. The travel lanes along these corridors are also narrow when compared to I-15. This, in conjunction with view blocking foreground elements, orients views generally forward rather than to the side. Refer to the Key Observation Points to see views from these public roadways.

### **b. Residents**

Numerous homes are located within the project viewshed west of the Project site and I-15. Large, estate-style single family residences are located on the eastern slopes of the ridgeline west of I-15. Many residents in this area have elevated views of at least a portion of the Project site. These are long-term, stationary views toward a rural area with mountainous backdrop. The Lake Rancho Viejo subdivision exists south of SR 76 and the San Luis Rey River. The proposed Project would not alter the topography and vegetation that generally restrict views of the Project site from this area.

### **c. Recreational Users**

Monserate Mountain Trail, a hiking trail, is located north and east of the Project site. Portions of this trail are included in the County of San Diego Trail Master Plan. Although views to the Project site from the existing Monserate Mountain Trail are generally blocked due to local topography and grove vegetation, some portions of the trail offer expansive views of the project. In these cases, portions of the Project site are visible in the middle ground beyond a foreground of native vegetation. Views of I-15, other man-made road improvements, and existing residential areas are visible in background views from this trail. The current view of the Project site, from the trail, includes natural vegetation that extends from the Fallbrook Land Conservancy land transected by the existing

Monserate Mountain Trail in the foreground; pastures on- and off-site and on-site groves and Rosemary's Mountain in the mid-ground. Some residences, agriculture, highways, and natural areas are visible in the background. Rosemary's Mountain is a dominant element along with the ridges that define the project's viewshed (see Cross Section E, Figure 16).

Another trail is located in the Fallbrook Land Conservancy's Engle Family Preserve, accessible from Sumac Road just south of Pala Mesa Drive (see Aerial Photo & Surrounding Land Uses, Figure 2). This preserve is located within a residential area west of I-15 and the preserve's trail provides an extensive, elevated view of the San Luis Rey River Valley and the I-15 corridor, including the Project site, Rancho Viejo subdivision, and the Monserate Mountains in the background. This trail is primarily a hiking trail and provides views of the Project site due to the provision of a bench that overlooks the valley. The quantity of viewers is low and the sensitivity of these views is moderate to low due to the variety of man-made and natural elements that comprise these views. Hikers using the trail are currently adversely affected by noise and visual impacts associated with the existing I-15 corridor.

There are no public parks in the vicinity of the Project site. Several private golf courses exist within five miles of the Project site. The nearest is Pala Mesa Resort, directly west of the Project site and separated from it by I-15. The vegetation and landforms that screen the highway from golfers' views from this private golf course also shield the Project site.

#### **d. Key Observation Points**

Several field surveys were conducted between February 1 and February 28, 2007, and March 23, 2009, to assess the visibility of the proposed Project from the surrounding area. Key Observation Points (KOPs), consisting of photographs taken from public viewpoints, used below to support the analysis, identified based on the number and frequency of views, the potential sensitivity of viewers, and the types of project-related features that would be visible. Locations for KOPs (Figure 18) were selected using the following criteria:

- Type of viewers/viewpoint (public views are considered more sensitive than private views)
- Breadth of the view (views taking in a number of elements rely less on any one element than those focusing on a specific criterion)
- Depth of the view (increased distance from the observed element makes it appear smaller, less detail is registered, and visibility may be affected by atmospheric conditions such as fog, smog, etc.)
- The amount of time (duration) and/or number of times each observer is exposed to the view
- Number of viewers exposed to the view (a greater number of viewers makes the view more sensitive)
- Designated scenic viewpoints and scenic highways are considered sensitive viewpoints

## **F. Applicable Policies and Planning Documents**

Visual resources may be subject to plans and policies developed to ensure adequate consideration is given to preserving and/or enhancing the visual qualities of an area. The proposed Project is subject to the following guidelines and policies.

### **1. State of California**

California adopted a Scenic Highway Program (Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq.) in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the visual quality of areas that are adjacent to highways. The scenic designation is based on the amount of natural landscape visible by motorists, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the motorist's enjoyment of the view.

I-15 is classified as an "Eligible" California Scenic Highway from SR 76 north to SR 91 near the city of Corona. Since the Project site is immediately north of SR 76 and east of I-15, it is located within the Scenic Highway corridor. The eligible designation can be changed to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the Department for a scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designed as a Scenic Highway.

### **2. County of San Diego**

#### **a. General Plan - Scenic Highway Element**

The Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan (adopted January 1975, amended December 1986) was established to preserve and enhance the County's scenic, historic and recreational resources with a network of scenic highway corridors. The County has designated numerous roadways as scenic routes, based on the following criteria:

- Routes traversing and accessing major recreation or scenic resources
- Routes traversing lands under the jurisdiction of public agencies
- Routes supported by significant local community interest
- Routes offering unique opportunities for the protection and enhancement of scenic recreational and historical resources

A County-designated First Priority Scenic Route (route meeting three or more of the Scenic Highway System Priority List criteria) is located in the vicinity of the Project site: SR 76 from El Camino Real east to I-15, excluding the portion within the city of Oceanside.

I-15 from SR 76 north to the Riverside County line, including the segment that is immediately adjacent to the Project site on the west is a County Third Priority Scenic Route (route meeting one of the criteria).

## **b. Fallbrook Community Plan**

The Project site is located within the Fallbrook Community Plan (County of San Diego 1988) area. The following Fallbrook Community Plan element goals and policies apply.

### *Community Beautification and Design Goal*

Goal: It is the goal of the County of San Diego to encourage sensitive design for all new development within Fallbrook, as well as encourage the upgrading and beautification of existing development.

### *Policies:*

1. Mature trees and significant landforms should be preserved in all public and private development projects.
4. On- and off-site signs should complement the aesthetic value and village character of the community.
6. A “village style” architectural design theme should be encouraged throughout the community.
8. Necessary grading impacts should be minimized through wise grading practices, and landscaped areas that are disturbed by grading should be revegetated. Drainage and runoff should be controlled so as not to exceed the rate associated with the property prior to grading.
9. Development which impacts the ridgeline silhouettes should be discouraged.
10. Development of steep slopes should be limited to agriculture and very low residential densities and clustering promoted in flatter areas.

### *Circulation Element*

Goal 4: The transportation network should encourage the preservation of the rural and agricultural character of the community.

Policy 4.1: Local roads shall be designed with maximum emphasis on scenic beauty by following natural contours and avoiding extensive grading to the greatest possible extent.

Goal 5: It is the desire of the community to maintain the presently existing rural agricultural appearance. Therefore, new residential developments are encouraged to provide adequate off-street parking areas for both residents and visitors.

Policy 8.2: Public non-motorized trail systems shall be encouraged within new residential subdivisions.

## **c. I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan**

### *Scenic Preservation*

Goal: Preserve, to the extent possible, the scenic attributes of the I-15 corridor.

### *I-15 Corridor Study Area Scenic Preservation Guidelines*

The *I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan* contains Scenic Preservation Guidelines that apply to the unincorporated portion of the I-15 Corridor, which includes the Project site. The guidelines are intended to (1) protect and enhance scenic resources within the I-15 Corridor planning

area while accommodating coordinated planned development which harmonizes with the natural environment; (2) establish standards to regulate the visual quality and the environmental integrity of the entire corridor; and, (3) encourage scenic preservation and development practices compatible with the goals and policies of the five community and Subregional Planning areas encompassed by the I-15 Corridor area, when appropriate.

The standards pertain to site design, parking areas, site lighting, landscaping, natural features and architecture.

#### **d. Resource Protection Ordinance**

The County's Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) provides special regulations applicable to certain types of discretionary applications, including tentative maps. The ordinance focuses on the preservation and protection of the County's unique topography, natural beauty, diversity, natural resources, and quality of life. It is intended to protect the integrity of sensitive lands including wetlands, wetland buffers, floodplains/floodways, sensitive habitats, cultural resources, and steep slopes, which are components of visual quality and community character.

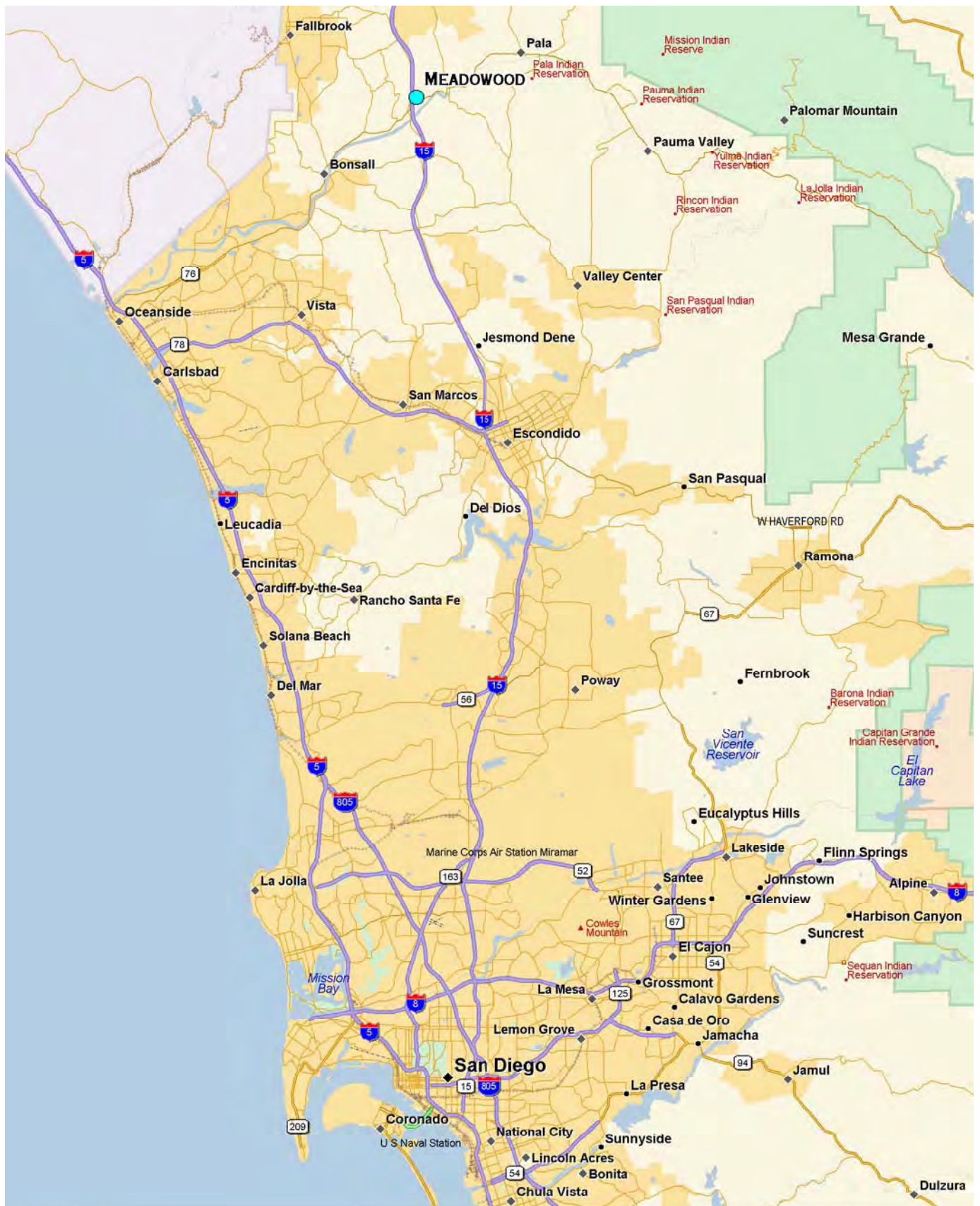
The RPO defines steep slopes as all lands having a natural gradient of 25 percent or greater and a minimum rise of 50 vertical feet, unless said land has been substantially disturbed by previous legal grading.

The Project is subject to and complies with the requirements of RPO. Areas of steep slopes, areas of RPO encroachment, and grading cut and fill zones are provided as Figures 38, 39, and 40, respectively.

#### **e. Dark Skies/Glare**

The County of San Diego Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (Division 9, sections 59.101-59.113 of the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance) seeks to control undesirable light rays emitted into the night sky in order to reduce detrimental effects on astronomical research. Zone A, defined as the area within a 15-mile radius centered on the Palomar Observatory and within a 15-mile radius centered on the Mount Laguna Observatory has specific light emission restrictions. The unincorporated portions of San Diego County not within Zone A fall within Zone B, and are subject to lesser restrictions. Outdoor lighting, such as security or parking lot lighting must be less than 4050 lumens and fully shielded within Zone B. The Project site is located more than 15 miles from Mts. Palomar and Laguna, and is therefore within the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance Zone B.





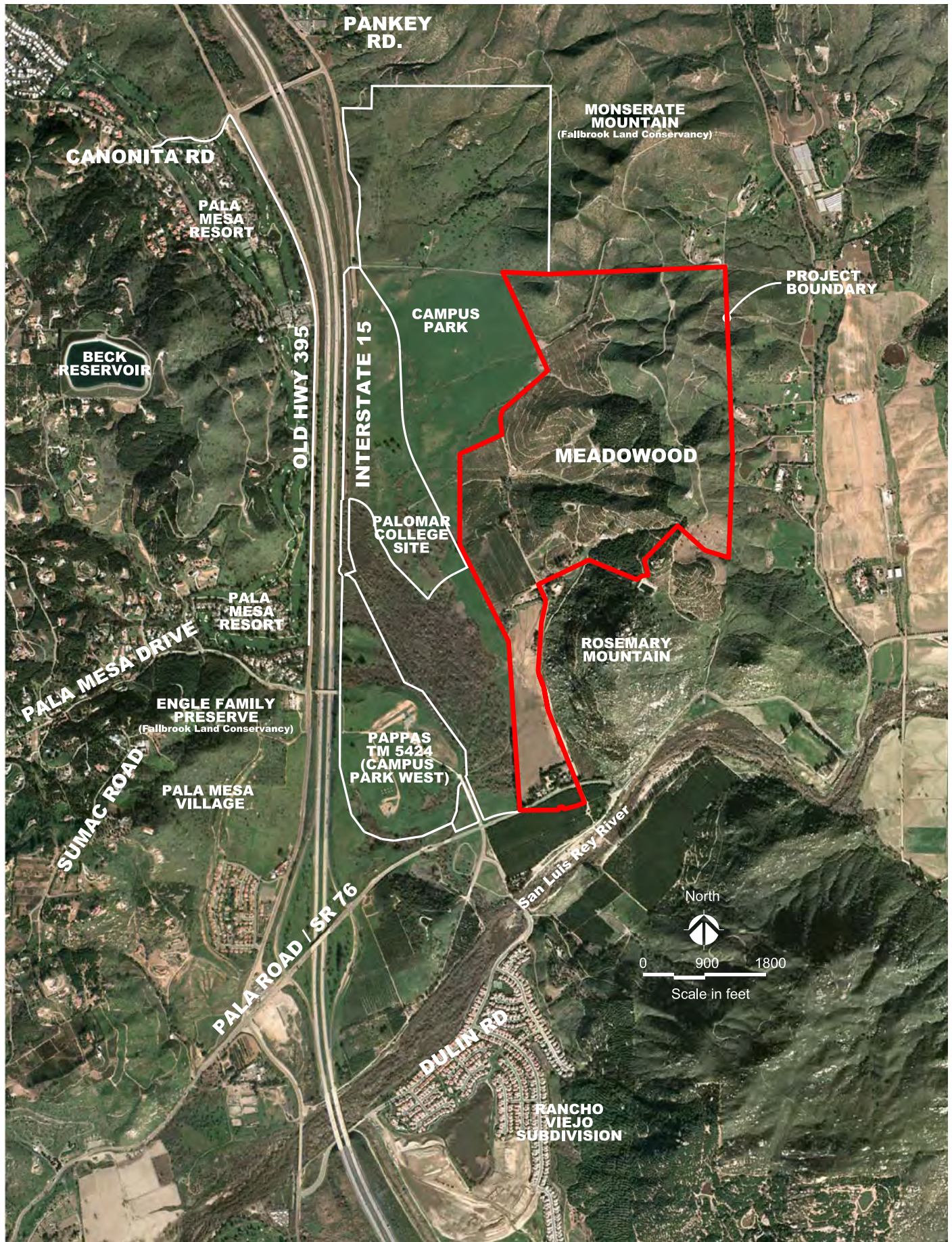
ata use subject to license.  
 2004 DeLorme. XMap® 4.5.  
 www.delorme.com

## Regional Location

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 1



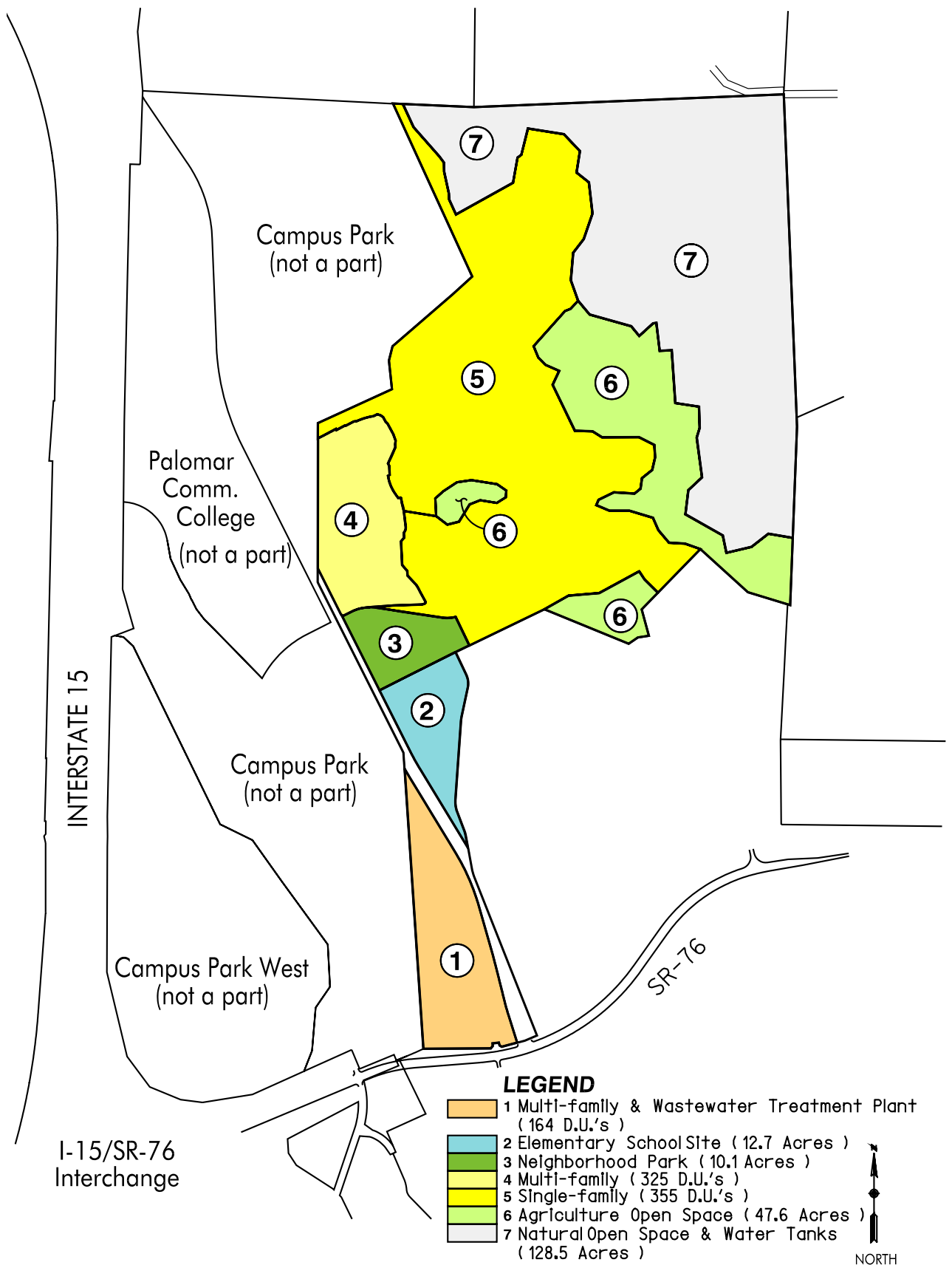


**Aerial Photo & Surrounding Land Uses**

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 2

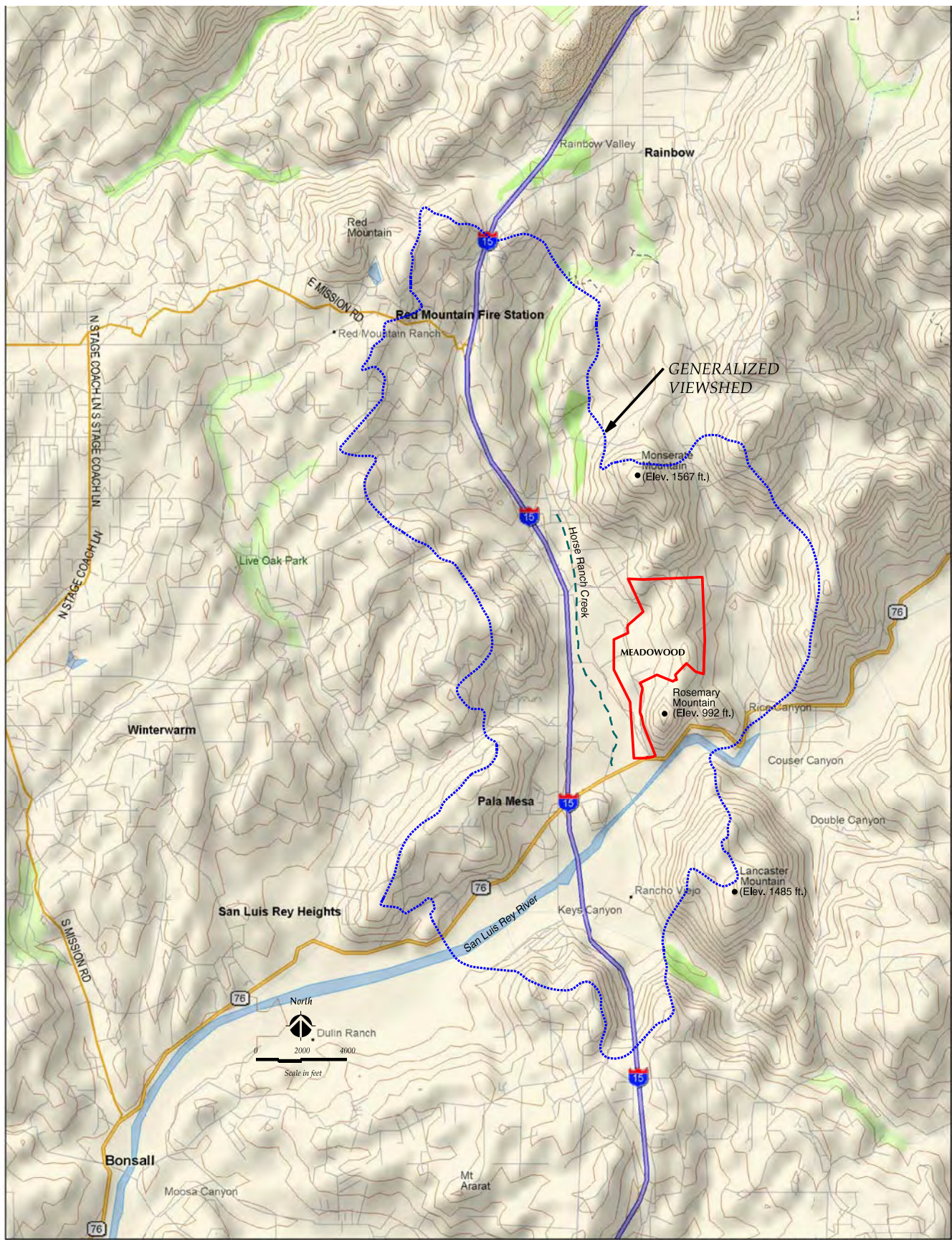




This exhibit is intended for the sole use of Pardee Homes as a visual aid. This exhibit should not be relied on as an accurate representation of existing and future development or land uses. For current information regarding development within this area, consult the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use or other appropriate governing agency exercising jurisdiction or control over the subject matter of the inquiry.

## Land Use Plan

## FIGURE 5 (OVERSIZE)



Data use subject to license.  
 © 2004 DeLorme. XMap® 4.5.  
 www.delorme.com

TN  
 MN (12.6°E)

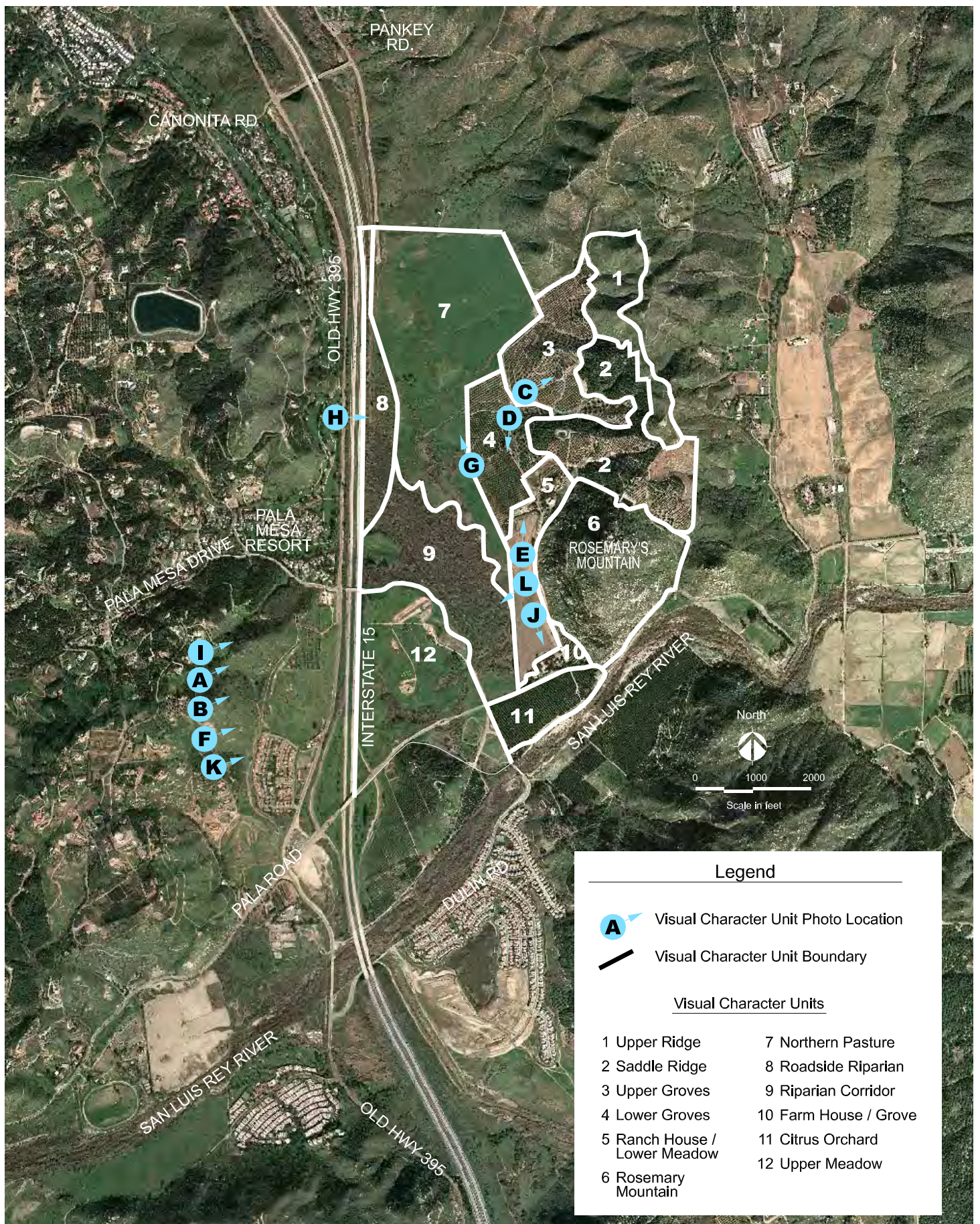
Scale 1 : 68,750  
 0 1 2 3 mi  
 0 1 2 3 km  
 1" = 1.09 mi Data Zoom 11-5

## Generalized Viewshed

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 6





## Existing Visual Character Units

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 7





Photo A - Upper Ridge



Photo B - Saddle Ridge

## Visual Character Photographs

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 8



Photo C - Upper Groves



Photo D - Lower Groves

## Visual Character Photographs

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 9





Photo E - Ranch House / Lower Meadow



Photo F - Rosemary Mountain

## Visual Character Photographs



Photo G - Northern Pasture



Photo H - Roadside Riparian

## Visual Character Photographs

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 11



Photo I - Riparian Corridor



Photo J - Farm House/Grove

## Visual Character Photographs





Photo K - Citrus Orchard



Photo L - Upper Meadow

## Visual Character Photographs

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 13

### III. Visual Impact Evaluation

#### A. Thresholds of Significance

The project will result in a significant impact if it would:

##### 1. Visual Resources

1. Change the composition of visual pattern in the visual environment and the change would be incompatible with the existing visual character in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity.
2. Result in physical changes that would substantially degrade the quality of an identified visual resource, including but not limited to, unique topographic features, steep slope lands (as defined in the County's RPO), ridgelines, undisturbed native vegetation, surface waters and major drainages, public parks, or recreational areas.
3. Result in physical changes (i.e. land disturbing activities) to the visual environment that would demonstrably and adversely affect the viewshed of a designated scenic highway, scenic vista, or the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan area (as contained in the Fallbrook Community Plan).

##### 2. Dark Skies and Glare

4. Install outdoor light fixtures that do not conform to the San Diego County Light Pollution Code (Sections 59.108-59.110) lamp type and shielding requirements and County Zoning Ordinance.
5. Install highly reflective building materials including, but not limited to, reflective glass and high-gloss surface color in areas that will be visible along roadways, pedestrian walkways or in the line of sight of adjacent properties.

##### 3. Consistency with Policy and Planning Documents

6. The project would not comply with applicable state or local goals, policies or requirements related to visual resources, including but not limited to the California Scenic Highway Program, San Diego County Scenic Highway Program, San Diego County General Plan, (Scenic Highway Element, Open Space Element), Fallbrook CP including the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan and Scenic Preservation Guidelines, San Diego County Zoning Ordinance (Scenic Area and Design Review Area regulations), and the RPO and Hillside Development Policy.

#### B. Guideline Sources

Guideline Nos. 1 and 2 are derived from the CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, Environmental Checklist Form and are intended to support definition of whether the proposed Project will have a significant impact on visual character and quality. Due to this circumstance, these two significance guidelines are based on established principles from the most widely used and accepted visual resource assessment methodologies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation, *Federal Highway Administration's Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects*; the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Visual Management System;

and the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) modified Visual Management System. The concepts contained in these assessment approaches provide accepted practices for evaluating visual resources both objectively (visual character) and subjectively (visual quality). This is accomplished by comparing the existing visual environment to the construction and post-construction visual environment; and subsequently, determining whether the project will result in physical changes that are deemed to be incompatible with visual character or degrade visual quality, as outlined in Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Guideline No. 3 is based in part on the principles discussed above as well as the Scenic Highway Element and Fallbrook Community Plan. Any impacts to visual quality and character of scenic highways, vistas, and I-15 Corridor will be evaluated in terms of visual quality and character. In addition, the project is required to be in conformance with applicable County standards related to aesthetics, including the General Plan and standards that apply to the I-15 corridor, including the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan. Non-compliance would result in a project that is inconsistent with County standards and may result in a potentially significant impact.

Guideline Nos. 4 and 5 rely on the lamp and shielding requirements established in the San Diego County Light Pollution Code (Sections 59.108-59.110) that have been determined to effectively reduce impacts on dark skies. The standards are the result of a collaborative effort between technical lighting experts, astronomers, and County staff to effectively address and minimize the impact of light pollution on dark skies. The standards were developed in cooperation with lighting engineers, astronomers, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories, San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use and Department of Public Works, and local community planning and sponsor groups. As outlined under the Legislative Intent of the LPC (Section 59.101), "The intent of the Division is to restrict the permitted use of outdoor light fixtures emitting undesirable light rays into the night sky which have a detrimental effect on astronomical research." The Code was written specifically to ensure that new outdoor lighting would have minimal impacts on astronomical observatories. Therefore, compliance with the ordinance is, by definition, assurance of no significant impact. The corollary to this is that non-compliance results in possible significant impacts. Therefore, a project that exceeds these significance guidelines would represent a potentially significant impact on dark skies. These standards have also been included in the County Guidelines for Determining Significance, Dark Skies and Glare, approved July 30, 2007 (First Minor Modification January 15, 2009)

Guideline 6 is taken from the San Diego Guidelines of Significance, Visual Resources, approved July 30, 2007) and is intended to assure that the visual character and quality of communities are developed consistently with all applicable regulations.

### **C. Analysis Methodology**

In compliance with the thresholds of significance and analysis methodologies determined for the proposed Project, this analysis includes the following elements and considerations:

- Cross-sections of major areas of grading and comparison of the existing condition and visual prominence of the project on finished grade.
- A map of the viewshed and a discussion of communities and roads from which it may be viewed as a prominent feature.
- A discussion of the compatibility of the scale and mass of the proposed Project with the surrounding area using square footage, heights, and lot sizes of other uses in the vicinity of the proposed Project.
- A discussion of the architectural style of the structures and their site utilization related to the manner in which surrounding properties have developed.
- A discussion of the proposed landscape plan in light of the ability of the plantings to soften the exterior appearance and relative massiveness of the proposed structures.
- Photo simulations and analysis comparing project to existing setting.

## **D. Analysis of Project Effects and Determination of Significance**

### **1. Change in the Composition of the Visual Environment (Guideline No. 1)**

#### **a. State Route 76**

SR 76 borders the Project site at its southern edge. SR 76 is a First Priority Scenic Route west of I-15, but has no scenic designation east of I-15, where the Project site is located. The visual character of SR 76, in this area, is somewhat rural in nature. *Key Observation Points (KOPs) 1 & 2*, Figure 19, illustrate typical views looking northeast toward the site from SR 76. Common visual elements on the land adjacent to SR 76 in the vicinity of the Project site are varied and consist of street clutter (street lighting, traffic signals, traffic & directional signs), temporary signs, overhead utilities, agricultural groves, undeveloped lots and a mix of ornamental trees and dense riparian woodland. Rosemary Mountain is visible in the middle-ground along with dense riparian woodland backed by verdant groves. Monserate Mountain is visible in the background.

*Key Observation Point 2*, Figure 19, is taken from SR 76 and illustrates a view looking northeast toward the southern portion of the Project. The upper meadow area is visible in the foreground backed by the topographically lower riparian corridor. Rosemary's Mountain is visible in the background right. The Monserate Mountains are prominent in the background. The dense stand of riparian trees visible in KOP 2, behind the upper meadow, visibly screens the lower development areas of the Project from view. It is anticipated that a large percentage of this vegetation would be conserved in permanent open space as part of the proposed Campus Park project (see cumulative visual impacts), and will provide a backdrop for northern views from SR 76. These trees will also serve to screen the remainder of the Project site from view. The ridgelines of the Monserate Mountains, visible in the background, would not be altered by the Project, and will continue to provide a backdrop for views northward from SR 76.

Further to the east (KOP 1, Figure 19) the southern portion of the Project, consisting of the WWTP and multi-family area PA1, would come into view. The WWTP, which abuts the Projects southern boundary, will be approximately 10 feet in vertical elevation above the adjoining SR 76 parkway. Perimeter slopes will be landscaped with naturalizing patterns of shrubs and groundcover. A row of street trees will line the roadway and proposed Community Pathway. The multi-family area PA 1 would be approximately 120 feet north and 5 feet below the adjoining WWTP. Slope trees and landscape plantings internal to PA 1, in conjunction with foreground plantings along SR 76, and view blocking riparian vegetation to the west of the Project would provide a visual buffer, screening much of these areas from view to viewers travelling on SR 76. Sound attenuation barriers,<sup>4</sup> would be located at the top of slope near the southern Project boundary. Buildings associated with the WWTP would be concentrated at the western portion of the WWTP site. It is anticipated that these buildings and the sound attenuation barriers would be partially screened by the row of foreground street trees at maturity (see Section F, Figure 16). Landscape concept plans, provided as Appendix A, depict the proposed landscaping and wall treatments.

The southern portion of the Project would be connected via a major roadway, Horse Ranch Creek Road, which provides access to the remainder of the Project. This roadway would be aligned approximately along the left edge of KOP 4, Figure 21, at the foot of Rosemary's Mountain, and contains widened parkways and median planted with a mix of ornamental and native trees and shrubs designed in a rural vernacular.

Cross-section A, provided as Figure 14, illustrates that a portion of the Project site will need to be filled in to raise the ground level above the Horse Ranch Creek flood plain. The realigned SR 76 (discussed in cumulative projects below) would similarly be raised; therefore, the grading required within this portion of the Project site would not be highly visible. That which is visible will consist of slopes, a maximum of 10 feet in height that would be softened in appearance with naturalized plantings and screened by foreground canopies of grove trees. Grading visible from SR 76, along the western edge of the southern portion of the Project, will be largely screened by existing off-site riparian vegetation.

Cross-section B, Figure 14 is drawn from a location on SR 76 corresponding to KOP 2 and illustrates a typical view looking northeast toward the Project. As this exhibit illustrates, the southern multi-family residential portion of the Project (PA 1) would be located on the flatter portions of the site, behind and slightly above the adjoining riparian area. The dense foreground of riparian vegetation would combine with foreground topography to buffer the multi-family area from view.

Simulated viewpoints KOP 2 & 3 are provided as Figures 20 and 22. These views look northeast toward the Project from locations east of I-15 near the Pala Road (SR 76) intersection, approximately 3,200 feet from the Project's southern boundary. As these simulations demonstrate, extensive views of the Project are not available from this area due to view blocking vegetation and topography. However portions of the terraced

---

<sup>4</sup> To the extent feasible, a combination of walls and berming will be provided for sound attenuation with a maximum height of 6 feet. In circumstances where this is not feasible, wall heights will be constructed consistent with the mitigation measures of the EIR and may exceed this height.



single-family development would be visible contrasting moderately with the retained grove vegetation. Views of the southernmost single family development area would be blocked by Rosemary's Mountain, visible in the middle-ground right. Views toward the multi-family areas would be substantially screened from view by intervening tall riparian vegetation and topography.

The Project as viewed from the Highway 76 corridor would not be visually prominent due to the presence of dominant, foreground, man-made elements, dense view-blocking riparian vegetation located in the middle-ground, and retention of prominent landforms and vegetation, including background peaks and upper grove areas, in the background. Additionally, the proposed realignment of SR 76, east of Pankey Road, would contain a row of street trees and naturalized parkway and slope plantings between the Project and the SR 76 paved roadway surface. While the upper single family residential development areas (PA 5a, b, and c) will be partially visible, along with tall manufactured slopes (see *Slope Heights*, Figure 41) the contrast of these areas with the existing visual environment would be minimized to the greatest extent possible through site planning, architectural and landscape guidelines required by implementation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment and the right-of-way improvements anticipated as part of the SR 76 realignment project. As a result a moderate change in visual character is anticipated but will not result in significant visual impacts to viewers traveling along the SR 76 corridor. The Project is located within the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan area. Existing scenic resources will be protected in accordance with the requirements of this Plan.

A future San Diego County Third Priority Community Pathway is identified along approximately 400 feet of SR 76. Although views for pedestrians and bicyclists of the Project would be available for a longer term due to their slower travel speeds, the visual effects for these users would be similar to those for motorists along SR 76. Beyond the proposed noise barrier, most of the Project would not be visible to users on this pathway, and the surrounding hills, mountains, street trees and naturalized slope vegetation would serve as dominant visual elements. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in significant visual impacts to recreational users on the proposed SR 76 pathway.

#### **b. Old Highway 395**

The Project would be visible from segments of Old Highway 395 that lie to the west of the Project (see KOP 5-9, Figures 23-28). Views of the Project site from locations along Old Highway 395 would be partially blocked by foreground vegetation and existing fencing within the Old Highway 395 and Interstate 15 rights-of-way, as well as riparian habitat along Horse Ranch Creek.

Portions of the Project would also be visible from segments of northbound Old Highway 395, south of West Lilac Road (KOP 10, Figure 27). These views encompass the existing Rancho Viejo subdivision located south of SR 76, the Pala Mesa Resort and Golf course, scattered rural homes, orchards, grazing lands, and the gas station, hamburger restaurant and park and ride facility located at the I-15/Highway 76 intersection. Changes would occur to available views from this highway due to interruptions in the existing patterns of grove vegetation and pasture land by residential development. Steep graded

slopes will also be visible and will be seen generally following the contours of the existing topography. This will soften their appearance by relating to the pattern character of the steep backdrop of the Monserate Mountains. While these graded slopes would exceed 100 feet in height in some locations, their impact will be minimized to the greatest extent possible through plantings intended to blend the appearance of the graded slopes with the nearby groves and steep natural hillsides. Once established with plantings, the contrast between the tall manufactured slopes and the surrounding topography would be reduced.

The upper groves and steep natural slopes and ridgelines would remain intact with the exception being the areas associated with proposed water tanks which would be located on the saddle ridge between Rosemary's Mountain and the Monserate Mountains. While they would be visible from locations directly west and northwest of the Project, the tanks would be sited for the most part below the surrounding grade and will be substantially screened by Rosemary's Mountain to the south and buffered by existing and proposed screening vegetation to the north, west and east (see *Photo Simulations of KOP 2, 6, 7, & 9*, Figures 20, 24, 26, & 28, respectively). Changes to the existing visual environment would occur but will be reduced through the implementation of site planning, architecture, and landscape architectural guidelines of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment. While the visual environment in this area would remain primarily open and rural despite the visible nearby developments, the Project would, over time, be integrated into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible through implementation of the Project's guidelines. Trees and shrubs planted on foreground slopes and streetscapes would buffer the Project from view, creating interruptions in the horizontal pattern of development and pattern elements similar in character to the neighboring natural slopes and groves.

Views toward the Project site also are available from segments of Old Highway 395 that is generally located between SR 76 and Tecolote Road. Available views are similar to those from I-15, but would include more view-obstructing foreground elements such as the I-15 corridor, associated concrete center barrier, vehicles on I-15, chain-link fences, and vegetation. In addition, similar to existing conditions for motorists on I-15 and SR 76, views toward the Project would be peripheral, and the time a motorist would spend looking directly at the Project would be short-term due to the vehicle's speed and the driver's focus on the road ahead. The proposed Project would primarily change the continuity of the existing groves by introducing horizontal patterns of residential development and associated grading and by introducing suburban elements into a rural and open space landscape. These changes to views from Old Highway 395 created by the Project would potentially result in significant visual effects, however, through implementation of the guidelines of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment, landscaping planted on foreground slopes and streetscapes will buffer the Project from view, creating interruptions in the horizontal pattern of development. As the canopy of vegetation develops it would increasingly relate in color, form, texture and line, with the existing background of vegetation, both natural and agricultural, thereby relating to other elements in view. As a result, a moderate change to the visual character of this area would occur as a result of this Project.

### c. Other Area Public Roadways

The local area roadways provide motorists and pedestrians with restricted to expansive views into the site, depending on the viewing location and the viewer activity. West of the Project site, east-west-heading traffic travels on SR 76 and Reche Road. The larger north-south roadways are Gird Road, located west of the Project's viewshed, I-15, and Wilt Road, transecting the ridgeline at the Project's western viewshed boundary. Many of the public roads within this area are two-lane rural collectors used by local residents within the low-density residential community. These roads often transition into private roads. Motorists traveling along these corridors generally have very brief views of the Project due to existing view-blocking foreground vegetation that would confine a traveler's view to the immediate vicinity. The curving nature of many of the local roads, which would result in a frequent shifting of the viewers' focus, also would limit available views toward the Project. The Project site would be visible from areas of higher elevation and from roadways with less parkway vegetation.

The proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse visual impact to these areas due to the brief nature of these views caused by intervening foreground obstacles such as structures, vegetation, topography, and I-15. The eastern backdrop of the Monserate Mountains would remain intact, continuing to serve as a visually dominant background element.

Views from public collector roadways north, east, and south of the Project site generally are not available due to intervening vegetation and topography. Therefore, **the proposed Project would not result in a significant visual impact to views from local area public roadways in the vicinity.**

### d. Area Residences

Views toward the Project site from surrounding residences would be stationary and long term. Although views from private property generally are considered less sensitive than public views, over which cities or counties can exercise a greater level of control, the issue is addressed here. Numerous homes are located within the Project viewshed west of the site and I-15 corridor. Most residences in this area are located at a higher elevation than the Project, and this elevation difference provides the potential for expansive views that include portions or the entirety of the Project site. The Monserate Mountains and upper slopes and groves would continue to serve as dominant background elements. Views toward the Project site are not visible from every house, however, due to intervening landscaping, structures, and in some cases topography.

Views of portions of the project are also available from several residences located east of the Project. These homes would have views towards, the proposed water storage facilities and associated access road, Fire Access Road and associated grading, and Project open space. Groves, natural open space, steep hillsides, and ridgelines, as depicted in KOP 22, would remain as dominant visual elements.

Project implementation would change the nature of these views from primarily vacant land, isolated rural residential structures and agricultural land to a suburban pattern of development, with roadways, manufactured slopes and residential rooftops dominating the middle ground views. The

background of mountains and hills, however, would be retained. Because these views are not considered sensitive and changes to the views from these homes would not change the dominant backdrop of ridgelines, steep natural slopes and groves, and because of Project design measures discussed earlier to minimize visual impacts, there would not be a significant adverse impact to views from these areas.

#### **e. Public Recreational Facilities, Existing and Planned**

No public parks exist within the Project site's viewshed. Several public hiking trails occur within the Project vicinity. Views from these trails to the Project site and potential visual impacts due to the development of the proposed Project are discussed below.

Monserate Mountain Trail: The Monserate Mountain Trail is a San Diego County Priority 1 public hiking trail located north and east of the Project site within a preserve owned and maintained by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy. This trail is accessible from the northern extension of Pankey Road, south of Stewart Canyon Road, and provides access to the slopes and ridge of the Monserate Mountain range. Portions of the Project site are visible from the trail that transects the western slopes of the mountain range, roughly paralleling the Project site boundary for approximately 4,500 feet. Key Observation Point 11 (Figure 29) was taken from a location on this trail, northeast of the Project. This photograph looks southwest over the Project, which can be seen towards the middle of the photograph. The south- and west-facing slopes and the more natural vegetation that exist within the northeastern portion of the Project site are visible in the foreground. The grove areas are visible in the middle ground, and pasture land and riparian vegetated creek is visible beyond them. The Interstate 15 corridor, commercial uses in the northwest quadrant of the I-15 interchange, the Rancho Viejo subdivision, scattered residences and topography defining the limits of the Project viewshed, comprise the background.

As depicted in Key Observation Point 11, a limited portion of the Project would be visible from this trail, limited at times due to local landforms and view-blocking foreground vegetation. Natural vegetation in the immediate foreground of the photograph would be retained however grading associated with water tank access road improvements will be visible. These disturbed slopes would be revegetated with plantings similar to that which lies on the adjacent natural slopes. Single family houses would be located to the west of the trail, the nearest one approximately 850 feet away, but separated from the trail by natural and agricultural groves. A 30-100 foot fire safety buffer consisting of low fuel plantings and thinned native vegetation would create a transition between the ornamental landscape within the residential development and the natural vegetation on the slopes surrounding the proposed Project; however, the proposed development would still be substantially screened from view.

As a result of view-blocking local landforms, topography, and middle ground of grove vegetation, available views of the Project would be limited. Where views would be available of the Project, they would relate to existing elements in view such as man-made improvements visible in the background as well as natural and grove vegetation visible in the foreground and middle ground. Landscaping planted on graded slopes, along roadways, and between residential structures will combine to screen the Project from view and provide context with the adjacent open space

and grove landscaping. As a result, **changes to views from the Monserate Mountain Trail, associated with the implementation of this Project, are not anticipated to be significant.**

**Engle Family Preserve:** The Engle Family Preserve is a 10-acre parcel owned and managed by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy located among the homes west of I-15. A hiking trail and viewing benches within the preserve are located on east facing slopes and provide extensive, elevated views the San Luis Rey River Valley and the I-15 corridor, including the Project site, as illustrated in KOP 12 (Figure 29). From this area the Pala Mesa Resort and golf course are visible at the base of the hills that make up the foreground view. The Project site is visible in the middle ground of the photograph, bordered on the west by I-15, riparian vegetation within Horse Ranch Creek, and the pastures of the Campus Park project. The Rancho Viejo subdivision is prominent in views slightly more south in orientation. The Monserate Mountains and Rosemary's Mountain provide dominant visual elements within the background of views from this trail and will remain intact.

Proposed single family houses, multi-family residences, parks, roads, parking lots, and school site would all be visible from this trail, constituting a major change to views from the Engle Family Preserve. Street trees and proposed landscaping on the slopes and internal to the Project would soften building masses and shield views of streets and parking lots, and vegetation on the surrounding hillsides and within Horse Ranch Creek would be conserved. Tall graded slopes would also be visible but their impact would be minimized to the greatest extent possible through plantings intended to blend the appearance of the graded slopes with the nearby groves and natural hillsides. The upper groves and steep natural slopes and ridgelines would remain intact as dominant background visual elements.

Proposed landscaping would provide some screening of the buildings and trees and shrubs will soften the appearance of the tall graded slopes, however, portions of the Project will contrast with the adjacent visible groves and undeveloped land. This will create discontinuity with the surrounding area and existing conditions. Although this would introduce a major change to the visual character of the Project site, the view is witnessed by a small number of people due to its relatively hard-to-find location. The natural horizon and the background of the Monserate Mountains, associated slopes, and upper groves would continue to dominate background views. Interstate 15 would continue to be a dominant element in the middle ground. Also, because of the elevated viewing angle from the Preserve, the vertical elements of the Project would be visually diminished. For these reasons, **the proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse visual impact to viewers at the Engle Family Preserve.**

**San Luis Rey River Trail:** A future San Diego County Third Priority Trail is identified north of the San Luis Rey River in the vicinity of the Project site. Portions of this trail potentially would have views of the southernmost portion of the Project site. Key Observation Point 13, Figure 30, illustrates a view looking north from the approximate location of this trail, near Shearer Crossing and the southern terminus of Pankey Road south of SR 76. The Project site is visible in the middle ground of the photograph, beyond a recently scrubbed, empty lot and behind dense riparian woodland. Nearby groves are visible at the right edge of the photograph and an undeveloped lot bordering the Project site to the

south is visible in the foreground. Surrounding hillsides to the north, east (right) and west (left) of the Project site make up the background of the photograph. Power lines and poles, and telecommunication towers, provide notable, non-natural elements in this view. Some of these exist on the Project site or bordering SR 76 located north of the trail and south of the Project boundary.

The portion of the Project that would be most visible from this trail would be a small portion of the terraced single-family residential area described in the discussion above pertaining to views from SR 76. The surrounding landforms would continue to provide a dominant background to views from this location, and the riparian vegetation and groves would be visible as foreground elements screening the multi-family areas from view, ensuring that the proposed buildings would be a small element in the broader view. Therefore, **the proposed changes would not create a significant adverse visual impact to views from this future trail location when compared with existing conditions.**

#### f. Illumination/Lighting

The currently open and undeveloped character of the Project site results in a nighttime setting with few lights visible in the I-15 valley area; however low intensity lighting is visible just west of the I-15 corridor. Development of the proposed Project would introduce numerous lights into the valley for safety and aesthetic reasons including indoor lights; safety and accent lights within private single family and multi-family residential areas, parking lot lighting, non-residential area lighting, accent lighting, street lighting, and park lighting. Each light would include louvers and shields to prevent glare and light spill onto neighboring properties and adjacent roadways. Additionally, the lighting would conform to the San Diego Light Pollution Code. Due to the exclusion of lighting from almost 50 percent of the Project comprising the open space and agricultural lots, and existing lighting west of the freeway within the Project viewshed, the introduced night lighting would not become a dominant element in the nighttime views of the valley. **This lighting is not anticipated to substantially contrast with existing conditions and therefore will not result in a significant adverse visual effect.**

## 2. Degrade the Quality of an Identified Visual Resource (Guideline No. 2)

The property contains steep slopes (see Steep Slopes, Figure 38), a ridgeline and undisturbed native vegetation. RPO-classified steep slopes (i.e., slopes with a 25 percent or greater slope gradient and with a 50-foot rise in elevation) are located in the north and eastern area of the Project site (see RPO Steep Slope Encroachment, Figure 39). The Project will preserve almost 100% of the ridgelines, the exception being a non-visually prominent 574-foot section of ridgeline where the proposed water tanks would be located on the saddle ridge between Rosemary's Mountain and the Monserate Mountains. While visible from locations directly west, northwest, and east of the Project (KOP 22, Figure 36), the tanks and associated access road will be sited for the most part below the surrounding grade and will be substantially screened by Rosemary's Mountain to the south and buffered by existing and proposed screening vegetation to the north, west and east. Additionally, the tanks would be painted earth tones to reduce their visual contrast. The Project will also

preserve approximately 164.1 acres of slopes that meet the definition of “steep slopes” under RPO. This is within the 10% allowance allowed by RPO. The elimination of a relatively small area of steep slopes and a portion of non-prominent ridgeline would not degrade the visual quality of that resource.

As described previously, 120.7 acres of the existing natural habitat will be conserved as permanent open space (Figure 42). Sensitive grading, clustering of homes, as well as conservation of major drainages and 49.3 acres of the existing groves will contribute to the retention of visual resources.

Because (1) a very small area of steep slope lands within a less visible area at the toe of slope would be disturbed, (2) a majority of native vegetation would be conserved within open space lots including the more visible area on the hillsides, (3) surface waters and major drainages would not be visually degraded, and (4) a relatively small section of non-visually prominent ridgeline would be disturbed, there would be a less than significant impact to identified visual resources.

### **3. Change the Visual Environment of a Designated Scenic Highway, Scenic Vista, or the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan Area (Guideline No. 3)**

#### **a. Interstate 15**

As mentioned above, portions of the Project site are visible from I-15, a County designated Third Priority Scenic Highway and a State “Eligible” Scenic Highway. The Project site also is located within the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan area of the Fallbrook Community Plan. The alignment of I-15 allows for a variety of visual experiences for drivers approaching and traveling through the valley within which the Project is located.

Expansive views of the I-15 valley corridor are available from locations along both the north and the southbound approaches (see Interstate 15 Project Visibility, Figure 17). These views include large portions of the valley, the San Luis Rey River, surrounding groves and natural hillsides, as well as a picturesque bridge spanning the hilltops at the valley’s southern edge. These views also include suburban and commercial development located south and west of the Project. The various Project elements, including the water tanks, would be visible within these views. The site and proposed development would not be large-scale elements in views, and Project landscaping would serve to soften the architectural mass of the structures and lessen the expanse of proposed tall graded slopes. Additionally, the surrounding viewshed elements such as steep natural slopes and ridgelines along the eastern edge of the Project site would not be altered, remaining as dominant background elements. Most houses within this portion of the I-15 corridor exist in neighborhoods west of the freeway, and are not highly visible due to ornamental landscaping. Some highly visible homes currently exist within the area, such as those south of the San Luis Rey River and east of I-15; however the visual character of the immediate Project area is open, agricultural, and undeveloped.

The Project site extends roughly parallel to I-15 for approximately one and one-half miles, to the east side of the proposed Palomar College and Campus Park project sites. A motorist traveling on I-15 at the speed limit of 70 miles per hour would parallel the site for approximately one and

one-half minutes. Views toward the Project for the northbound traveler, parallel to the Project, would be obstructed by roadside and riparian vegetation and topography (see KOP 14, Figure 30). Traveling south on I-15, more open views toward the Project would be available and include the small portion of on-site pasture, groves, and the abutting Monserate Mountains as depicted in KOP 6 & 7, Figures 23, 24 & 25.

The view-blocking vegetation within Horse Ranch Creek, in the southwestern vicinity of the Project, would be conserved in open space as part of the Campus Park and Palomar College projects. The large trees within the creek, located between I-15 and the Campus Park and Palomar College sites, restrict views toward the Project from I-15 for approximately ½ mile. This would prevent motorists, traveling north on I-15, parallel to the southern and central portions of the site, from having unobstructed views of the Project (see KOP 9, Figure 27). The upstream areas of Horse Ranch Creek however are narrower and support less vegetation than the southern portions. Some unrestricted views of the Project site would be available to viewers traveling south where this vegetation thins. These views are discussed below.

Key Observation Point 6, Figure 24, shows a view of the developed Project from Old Highway 395 looking east across I-15 approximately 3,000 feet from the site. This location is typical of the view from I-15 where relatively unrestricted views of the Project are available. From this location, there would be open views of the single-family development area trending upslope, as well as the multi-family area on the flatter portions of the site east of Horse Ranch Creek Road and Street B (see Cross Sections C & D, Figure 15). The views toward housing in the finger canyons would be blocked by existing vegetation located to the east of I-15. The contiguous pattern of grove plantings would be interrupted by residential structures, landscaping and graded slopes. The existing avocado groves, upslope of the Project would be retained; however, beyond that, the proposed water tanks and associated access road would be visible where not screened by foreground vegetation and topography. The dominant background viewshed components such as the prominent ridgelines and steep upper slopes would not be affected by the Project, except for the inclusion of the water tanks and access road, as mentioned earlier. In addition, views from this vantage point along I-15/395 would be intermittent, as there is existing vegetation and berming along the eastern edge of the freeway that interrupts the line of sight into the Meadowood property. The proposed Project elements would change the line, form, pattern, and visual harmony of the existing setting. The visibility of large slopes, some in excess of 100 feet, would contrast with the existing pattern elements in view. These slopes will follow the contours of the existing topography, which will soften their appearance against the steep backdrop of the Monserate Mountains. While these slopes would be visible from I-15, they would be planted with shrubs and trees that would provide erosion control and visual screening. The extra vegetation required by Project design would effectively lower any adverse effect associated with these fill and cut slopes to less than significant levels. Following installation and establishment, however, these areas would require long-term maintenance in order to ensure that the beneficial screening continues.

Initially the repeating patterns, lack of diversity, scale and density of the Project will contrast with the existing agricultural and rural setting. These changes, however, will be reduced through the implementation of



site planning, architecture, and landscape architectural guidelines of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment. While the visual environment in this area remains primarily open and rural despite the visible nearby developments, the Project will, over time, be integrated into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible through implementation of the Project's guidelines. No single house would be distinctly visible from I-15 due to the residence's location at distances of approximately 700 feet or greater east of the I-15 boundary. Instead, the views from I-15 toward these houses mainly would encompass landscaping and partial building views. The houses would have varied shapes and heights (not exceeding 35 feet), with earth-toned roofs and facade treatments. Streets would be lined with medium-sized trees with broad canopies, and manufactured slopes between groups of houses and fuel-modification/fire safety zones located between the outer edge of houses and the surrounding hillsides would be planted with shrubs and trees with similar visual character to those on the surrounding hillsides. This will provide a visual transition between the ornamental landscape within the development and the conserved vegetation and open space in the surrounding hillsides. This will also create interruptions in the horizontal pattern of development and soften the appearance of the manufactured slopes from I-15. As the canopy of vegetation matures it will increasingly relate in color, form, texture and line with the visible foreground and background of vegetation; the result of which will be change that is less than significant to existing views from the I-15 corridor.

As travelers descend into the valley from the north they are offered views of the Monserate Mountains, agricultural pastures, groves, and a relatively undeveloped rural landscape setting (see KOP 15-18, Figures 31 & 33). Development of the Meadowood Project will change this rural character by introducing a suburban land use into a predominately rural visual environment; however awareness of pattern elements varies with distance. From afar, only the largest objects are seen as individual forms and from this distance we will see the Project as a textured surface. Distance also attenuates the intensity of colors. From this distance (1.5 miles from site), the Project, therefore will not appear as individual elements but rather as a textural pattern, muted in color, and appearing in moderate contrast with the adjacent grove, pasture, and natural landscape patterns. Landform alterations will not be perceptible from this orientation and distance.

As travelers descend into the valley from the south (see KOP 20 & 21, Figures 34 & 36) they are offered distant views of the Monserate Mountains, pastures, and groves, a middle ground of Rosemary's Mountain and the San Luis Rey riparian corridor. The Rancho Viejo Subdivision is prominent as a foreground element as depicted in KOP 21, Figure 36. From this location, 1.5 miles from the Project, Meadowood would appear as an extension of the existing foreground development, however, since distance attenuates the intensity of colors and our ability to discern individual elements, the Project would appear as more of a textural pattern, contrasting slightly with other background elements in view.

As depicted in the Photo Simulation of KOP 21 (Figure 37), the lower portions of the housing in the finger canyons would be visible from this location, but the housing at the upper elevations in the canyon would be blocked by the foreground topography of Rosemary's Mountain when

approaching the Project from the south. The proposed water tanks and associated access road would be visible but not visually dominant. Landform changes would not be dominant and the Project would appear consistent with the pattern character of other elements in view. The upper groves and steep natural slopes and ridgelines will remain intact.

As the Photo Simulation of KOP 15, provided as Figure 32, depicts, changes to the existing visual environment would occur to views along I-15 for the southbound traveler due to Project related features such as the residential development, water tanks, and Project grading. These changes, however, would be reduced through the implementation of site planning, architecture, and landscape architectural guidelines of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment. While the visual environment in this area remains primarily open and rural despite the visible nearby developments, the Project would, over time, be integrated into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible through implementation of the Project's guidelines. Landscaping planted on foreground slopes and streetscapes will buffer the Project from view, creating interruptions in the horizontal pattern of development. As the canopy of vegetation develops it would increasingly relate in color, form, texture and line, with the visible foreground and background of vegetation, the result of which would be a moderate change to the visual character of this area as a result of this Project.

In summary, the Meadowood Project would initially change the character of the visual environment within the I-15 corridor by introducing dominant visual elements that would be in contrast with the existing open and rural pattern character of the Project site, however, these adverse impacts would be reduced through implementation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment, which establishes guidelines for development that will minimize contrast with the existing visual setting and community character. Over time the Project will be integrated into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible through landscaping planted on foreground and internal slopes and streetscapes which would buffer the Project from view, creating interruptions in the horizontal pattern of development. As the canopy of vegetation develops it will increasingly relate in color, form, texture and line, with the patterns of the existing hillsides and conserved agricultural groves. These physical changes as a result would not adversely affect the viewshed of the I-15 corridor, a state Eligible Scenic Highway and County Third Priority Scenic Route. Therefore, **the proposed Project would not result in significant adverse visual impacts to views from I-15.**

#### **4. Outdoor Light Fixtures Do Not Conform to the San Diego County Light Pollution Code (Guideline No. 4)**

The proposed Project would include a lighting plan that would conform to the San Diego Light Pollution Code (Sections 59.108-59.110). Lights would be shielded to prevent glare onto neighboring roadways and adjacent open space. Additionally, Project outdoor lighting would be fully shielded and restricted to 4050 lumens in conformance with the Light Pollution Code Zone B requirements. Therefore, **the proposed Project would not result in significant lighting visual impacts or conflict with the San Diego County Light Pollution Code.**

**5. Highly reflective building materials visible along roadways, pedestrian walkways, or in the line of sight of adjacent properties (Guideline No. 5).**

The exterior surfaces of buildings within the proposed Project generally would be covered stucco or concrete, and may include stone architectural accents. Within the non-residential portions of the proposed Project, the main color of all buildings would be earth tones, such as warm gray, off-white, or beige. Vegetation would also block some of the potential glare, particularly along roadways, pedestrian walkways, or where visible from neighboring properties. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in significant visual impacts due to the glare from highly reflective building materials.

**6. Consistency with Applicable Policies and Planning Documents (Guideline No. 6)**

**a. State of California**

As discussed previously, I-15 is an Eligible Scenic Highway. Potential impacts to the freeway from Project implementation have been addressed above in the Guideline No. 3 discussion.

**b. County of San Diego General Plan – Scenic Highway Element**

As discussed previously, I-15 is a County designated Third Priority Scenic Route. Potential impacts to the freeway from Project implementation have been addressed above in the Guideline No. 3 discussion.

**c. Fallbrook Community Plan**

The Fallbrook Community Plan (County of San Diego 1988) outlines goals and policies that seek to preserve the current community character. Goals and policies applicable to the proposed Project's visual character are cited in Subsection F.2.b of this report. These require the proposed Project to specifically address the following elements: existing vegetation; proposed signs and architectural styles; grading and slope revegetation; avoidance of steep slopes; the character and layout of roads and parking; and the inclusion of non-motorized trails.

The proposed Project addresses the Fallbrook Community Plan goals and policies, as described below.

Community Beautification and Design Goal, Policy 1 — Preservation of Mature Trees and Significant Landforms. Approximately 170.0 acres of existing vegetation (43 percent of the Project site) would be conserved within open space lots. Although, some mature trees may be removed to accommodate grading for residential pads, none would be removed from biological open space lots. While some mature trees may be removed, the Project's comprehensive landscape plan includes extensive planting of trees along roadways and within the development areas. It is expected that individual homeowners within the single family residential areas would also plant trees in their yards. Significant landforms such as steep natural slopes and ridgelines will be preserved.

Community Beautification Goal, Policy 4 — On- and Off-site Signs. Signs within the proposed Project would be designed to provide direction without being visually dominant. Styles, materials, and colors of signs

would reflect the proposed Project's architecture and would include stone to reflect visual elements of the surrounding hillsides. The Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment states that all street and community signs will be in conformance with County requirements and the Fallbrook Design Guidelines. Signs consider the Fallbrook aesthetic value and village character cited in this policy. The Meadowood community entry sign is provided as part of the landscape plans in Appendix A. It includes stone and equestrian style elements which reflect the proposed Project's architecture and visual elements surrounding the Project.

Community Beautification Goal, Policy 6 — "Village Style"

Architectural Theme. The proposed Project would include a variety of building uses with associated architectural guidelines. Architectural detailing would be designed to minimize the appearance of building massing, thereby visually reducing the structural scale and creating a "village" feel. Continuity between buildings would be provided through the use of common material and landscaping. All proposed Project architecture would include "village style" features such as porches, columns, arcades, overhangs, seating areas, and shade trees, as appropriate to the building use. The proposed Project would accommodate and encourage pedestrian connections between homes, parks, trails and offsite businesses and retail areas. All streetscapes along the major Project roadways would include landscaped parkways, sidewalks, or trails.

Community Beautification Goal, Policy 8 — Grading and Drainage. The majority of the proposed Project would be located on the flatter areas of the Project site. Grading and drainage will be managed in accordance with a project-specific Stormwater Management Plan. All manufactured slopes would be landscaped with ground cover, shrubs, and trees to provide erosion control and visual screening.

Community Beautification Goal, Policy 9 — Development which impacts the ridgeline silhouettes should be discouraged. The project is designed such that impacts to ridgeline silhouettes would be discouraged..

Community Beautification Goal, Policy 10 — Development of Steep Slopes. Approximately 187 acres (48 percent) of the Project site is steeper than 25 percent. These steep slopes, many of which are RPO steep slope lands, mainly occur in the northern and eastern portion of the Project site, in the Monserate Mountain foothills and in the canyon transecting the site in an east-west direction. Most of the development would occur in the flatter portions of the Project site, minimally impacting these existing steep slopes. The upper on-site elevation of the Monserate Mountain slopes would remain in a dedicated open space lot.

Circulation Element, Goal 4 — Preservation of Rural and Agricultural Character. Each of the roads within the proposed Project would be edged with landscaped parkways, sidewalks and/or rural, multi-use trails, as is the case with Horse Ranch Creek Road, the major Project access roadway. Additionally, landscaping proposed for the major Project entry (and reflected at entries into proposed Project neighborhoods and use areas) and Horse Ranch Creek streetscape would include oaks and sycamore trees and post-and-rail fences to echo the rural history of the site.

Circulation Element, Goal 4, Policy 4.1 — Local Roads Emphasis on Scenic Beauty. Street plantings along the primary and secondary theme roads shall include large canopy shade trees such as *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak), *Quercus virginiana* (Southern Live Oak), Liquidamber

styraciflua (Sweet Gum), Koeireuteria bipinnatta (Chinese flame tree), Platanus acerifolia (London Plane Tree) and Platanus racemosa (California sycamore). Existing groves shall be conserved to provide seasonal interest along the roadway edge treatment. The plantings along the road shall express the seasonal beauty of the region through indigenous materials. Ornamental plantings and native perennials shall be planted in mass along the streets and walkways. Special ornamental trees are planted at key entry nodes along the streets.

Circulation Element, Goal 5 — Maintain Existing Rural Agricultural Appearance with Off-site Parking. Adequate parking to serve the proposed Project uses would meet County requirements. Parking areas in the multi-family residential neighborhoods would be scattered among the buildings to reduce the mass of both buildings and parking lots. Additionally, off-street parking generally would be screened from view through the use of vegetation.

Circulation Element, Policy 8.2 – Public non-motorized trail systems shall be encouraged within new residential subdivisions. If possible, these trails should provide access to public transit facilities, schools and shopping areas. A community-wide trail network would provide access to nearby public transit facilities, schools, and shopping areas.

## **7. Short-term Construction-related Visual Effects**

### **(Guidelines Nos. 1 and 3)**

The proposed Project may be graded and constructed in several different phases dependent on market conditions and subject to change.

Visible construction activities during Project build-out would contrast with existing conditions due to removal of existing vegetation and the introduction of new, visually dominant elements, including raw soil, newly cut or filled slopes, construction fencing, construction equipment, and construction materials stockpiling and storage. These views would be visible from each Key Observation Point location discussed above, including the views from a scenic highway and a County Priority 1 recreational trail. Construction activities would disrupt the existing visual character of the Project site for several years. Landscaping, installed subsequent to each construction phase, would help lessen adverse visual effects of grading activities and building construction. Immediately following Project construction and sale, safety and other resulting lighting effects would result in increased glow over existing conditions. While street trees and internal landscaping, when mature, would help buffer the homes from views to the proposed Project from off-site areas, softening sharp edges, unifying the Project, and diminishing Project lighting and glare, this would not be the case in the short-term.

While “temporary” in nature and addressed through Project design landscaping over the long-term, the construction-period visual impacts would be significant, adverse, but short term

## **8. Cumulative Visual Impacts**

As noted in CEQA Guidelines Definitions and Section 15130, cumulative impacts are those resulting from combination of two or more individual effects; either (1) within a single project or (2) from a combination of multiple projects. Projects contributing to regionally cumulative visual effects (including the proposed Project) include those

within the Project viewshed. This encompasses the area within which the viewer is most likely to observe both the Project and surrounding community uses. As listed on Table 1 and graphically depicted on Figure 43, there are approximately 35 development projects within the Project viewshed. Ranging in size from 1 to 1,244 dwelling units, implementation of all the cumulative projects would result in more than 2,000 additional residences, as well as commercial and retail businesses, a college campus, hotels, offices, parks, and an elementary school, being built within the I-15 corridor.

Several of the cumulative projects would subdivide existing private lots for the purpose of building one to seven new single-family residences (8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 47, 48, 52, 81, 82, 91, and 92). These minor subdivisions are located generally west of the Project, within the existing neighborhoods located on the east-facing slopes west of I-15; one is north of the Project (17). Additionally, one of the proposed projects, located north of SR 76 and west of I-15, involves development of a single-unit home (82); one other would create two residential/agricultural lots (9). The proposed minor subdivisions and single family residence would result in the construction of approximately 80 single family houses within the Project viewshed. Visual changes associated with these proposed projects would be minor; the proposed structures would be located within existing neighborhoods, and generally at higher elevations than the Project. With anticipated landscaping, and, where required, project specific mitigation, they would visually blend with surrounding uses.

Several others would create 10-to-51 single-family developments (4, 6, 18, 33, 49, and 60). Most of these also are located west of the Project on the east-facing slopes west of I-15. One is north of the Project and east of I-15, near Stewart Canyon Road (6). The two larger of these projects are near the edge of the Project viewshed, and although several would be converting areas that currently are used for agriculture (e.g. groves), the majority would create large lots with similar characteristics to the existing rural residential development in the area. They also would be at higher elevations than the proposed Project and, with ornamental landscaping; it is likely that they would visually blend with surrounding uses. These proposed cumulative projects would result in the construction of 156 single-family residences.

One multi-family development (29) west of I-15 and the Project would create 39 condominium units near the existing Pala Mesa Resort. Although visual effects associated with these units are potentially significant due to community character conflicts, they are not highly visible in conjunction with the Project due to existing mature trees at the Pala Mesa Resort that screen views between the resort and the Project site, as discussed above in relation to views from Old Highway 395, where available views include view-obstructing or distracting foreground elements such as I-15, vehicles on I-15, foreground fences, and vegetation.

One project would involve minor changes to existing residences. Three of the proposed projects would develop additional single family residential units within an existing subdivision; two of these would occur within the subdivision south of the Project site and the San Luis Rey River. Although within the Project viewshed, these existing subdivisions would have obstructed views toward the Project site due to intervening vegetation and topography. Views toward the I-15 corridor valley that

include these existing subdivisions would not be altered due to the relatively minor additions proposed by these cumulative projects. Similarly, these future projects would not be readily visible from area roadways or public viewing locations.

One proposed project would consist of expansion of the existing facilities at the Pala Mesa Resort and the addition of new hotel rooms (11). Visual elements of Pala Mesa Resort, located directly west of I-15 from the Project, consist of a golf course, low-rise resort facility, and residential buildings surrounded by ornamental landscaping. The addition of new resort rooms and more landscaped acreage would not result in major visual changes to the viewshed because much of the proposed development would not be visible from scenic highways, recreational trails, or area residences. Therefore, the changes proposed by this project would not result in significant cumulative visual impacts.

Another cumulative project would consist of additional units at a bed and breakfast north of the proposed Project (7). The existing facility is located at a low elevation within the viewshed, and would not be highly visible in conjunction with the Project. The expansion of this bed and breakfast within the Project area would not result in major visual changes to the viewshed. Therefore, the changes proposed by this cumulative project would not result in significant cumulative visual impacts.

The addition of commercial buildings to an existing commercial site (90) on Old Highway 395 just northwest of the intersection of I-15 and SR 76 similarly would not result in major visual changes within the viewshed. The visual elements of the area within which these new buildings would be developed currently include parking lots, a service station, and a “take-out restaurant,” and the additional buildings proposed by this cumulative project would not result in significant visual impacts. Additionally, views toward the Project site are restricted from this location due to intervening topography and vegetation.

One cumulative project relates to the exploration of pipeline and water storage options (28). This project would not create visible changes to the viewshed.

Four of the proposed cumulative projects would be multiple-land-use developments as described below. Three of these, Campus Park (1), Campus Park West (2), and Palomar College (26), would be located on property immediately abutting or very close to the Project site. One proposed development, Pala Mesa Highlands (3), would be located west of I-15 and north of SR 76. Together, these four projects would develop 1,613 single- and multi-family residences, commercial uses, offices, parks, and a college site.

The Campus Park project (1) would be located on 417 acres just west of the Project site. Grassland areas cover a large portion of the flat areas on this Project site, which is generally undeveloped. Riparian vegetation associated with Horse Ranch Creek also is present on this site, as is upland native vegetation in the northern, more topographically varied portions. The Campus Park project would consist of a mixed-use development including 1,088 single-family and multi-family homes, commercial uses, professional office uses, private and public recreational areas, a Town, and designated open space and biological open space preserves.

Campus Park West (2) would be located on approximately 120 acres southwest of the proposed site. This mixed-use development would include 395 multi-family dwelling units; 110,000 square feet of general commercial uses; 10 acres of highway commercial; 300,000 square feet of office professional space; and 22.7 acres of open space, including a 4-acre park. The Campus Park West project site currently is largely undeveloped, and contains visual elements similar to the Project and adjoining Campus Park project site.

Pala Mesa Highlands (3) would be located west of I-15 and the Project, and north of SR 76. This proposed cumulative project, with densities of 1.6 dwelling units per acre would include 130 single-family residences, two parks, and 36.5 acres of open space on approximately 85 acres.

Palomar College (26) is located west of the Project site, between the central portions of the site and I-15. The Palomar College project would develop a new community college campus to serve approximately 12,000 students. The campus would include classroom and administration buildings, parking, open space, and athletic fields. This campus would not include residential facilities for students.

These four projects combined with the proposed Project would be visible from area roadways and recreational trails. Refer to the key views and photographs discussed above and in particular key views 17 and 20 (Figures 33 and 34). Key view 17 illustrates a view toward the Project from southbound I-15, a County Third Priority Scenic Route and a State Eligible Scenic Highway. The groves of the Project site are visible as a green swath near the base of Rosemary's Mountain, visible in the middle-right of the photograph.

Portions of these projects would be visible from several miles of northbound I-15 as depicted in key view 20. This key view illustrates views from a location on I-15, near the southernmost point in the Project's viewshed, just north of the West Lilac Road over-crossing. The Project site is visible in the middle ground of the photograph, surrounded by hills and peaks, including the Monserate Mountains to the right (east) of the Project site. Single-family houses south of the San Luis Rey River are visible to the right of the interstate. The existing groves of the Project site are visible at the foot of Rosemary's Mountain just above the red-roofed houses to the right of the interstate. The Campus Park and Palomar College sites are located between the Project site and I-15. The Campus Park West project site is blocked from view at this point by a small hill visible in the center of the photograph.

Each of these four cumulatively considerable projects, in combination with the proposed Project, would introduce a large number of buildings and suburban elements into areas that are currently undeveloped and/or used for agriculture. The College and Campus Park project would introduce large scale buildings and parking lots into the viewshed. While some existing development is visible within the valley and the I-15 corridor (e.g. the housing development south of the river), the projects would combine to create a major change in the existing visual character.

**Overall, the visual environment of the I-15 corridor viewshed in this area would be adversely affected by the major physical change in composition introduced by the cumulative projects that would be incompatible with the existing visual character of the area. Therefore,**



**the cumulative visual impacts would be significant.** (Guidelines No. 1 and 3)

Views to the Project site and surrounding area from recreational trails also would be affected. Some or all of the four largest proposed cumulatively considerable projects, and the Project, would be visible from the San Luis Rey River trail (proposed), the Engle Family Preserve, and Monserate Mountain trail; the latter two have extensive overviews of the Project from higher elevations. Refer to the key views from these trails, discussed above; in particular, refer to key view 12 (Figure 29), taken from the Engle Family Preserve. Within this view, the Meadowood site groves located on the slopes of the Monserate Mountains to the east of the Project site are dominant visual elements. Additionally, expansive views of the Campus Park and Palomar College projects would be visible as would be the northern portion of the Campus Park West project site to the right edge of the photograph, next to I-15. These projects would comprise major elements within the view from the Engle Family Preserve and from the Monserate Mountain trail. The proposed cumulative projects would create intensive highway commercial and suburban elements into surrounding hillsides and adjacent undeveloped/agricultural lots. **The overall effect would result in physical changes that would degrade the open, undeveloped views from these trails, creating a significant visual impact.** (Guideline No. 1)

**TABLE 1 - Cumulatively Considerable Projects**

MAP KEY	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	ACRES	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
1	SPA 03-008 TM 5338 GPA 03-04 R 03-014	Campus Park	Just east of I-15 at S 76 and Pankey Rd.	417	Mixed use development including 1,088 single-family and multi-family homes, commercial uses, and professional office uses, as well as parks, a Homeowner's (HOA) recreational facility, a Town Center (with potential very limited residential use), and designated open space and biological open space preserves.
2	TM 5424, S 05-014, SPA 05-001 GPA 05-003 REZ 05-005	Campus Park West	Northeast quadrant of I-15 and SR 76	118.5	Mixed-use development including approximately 395 MFR units, 110,000 s.f. General Commercial, 10 acres Highway Commercial and 300,000 s.f. Office Professional.
3	TM 5187 RPL11 SPA 99-005 MUP 99-020 R 99-020 MUP/REZ 04-024	Pala Mesa Highlands	West of Old Highway 395 between Pala Mesa Drive and Via Belamonte	84.6	Maximum of 130 SFR Density 1.6 DU/acre Lot sizes vary from 5,500 sf to 23,500 sf, two parks totaling 4.3 acres, 36.5 acres of open space. SPA to allow clustering
4	TM 4729 RPL3 TE	Tedder TM	South side of Pala Mesa Drive, west of I-15 and east of Daisy Lane	29.5	Split lot into 13 SF lots ranging in size from 1.0 to 6.43 acres net.

TABLE 1 - Cumulatively Considerable Projects					
MAP KEY	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	ACRES	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
6	TM 5532 S 07-012	Fallbrook Ranch	East of Old Highway 395 and Sterling View Drive (at Mission Road), Fallbrook		11 SFR lots
7	MUP 03-127	Los Willows Inn and Spa	532 Stewart Canyon Road		Add additional units to a Bed and Breakfast
8	TPM 20411	Reeve TPM	2987 Sumac Road, Fallbrook	8.8	Minor residential subdivision. 3 SFR lots (2-acres minimum).
9	TPM 2049193-02-00A	Evans TPM	West side of Sage Road between Sumac Road and Pala Road, Fallbrook	4.10	Minor subdivision into 2 Residential/agricultural parcels (2.00 and 2.10 acres). Private septic system.
10	TPM 20841	Bridge Pac West I TPM	3321 Sage Road, Fallbrook	15.90	Minor residential subdivision 4 SFR lots plus one remainder lot (2.04, 2.08, 2.12, 2.14 and remainder 7.08 net acres each).
11	SPA 03-005 R 00-000 IV. MUP 00-000 P 74-120W1 P 74-	Pala Mesa Resort	2001 Old Highway 395 at Tecalote Lane, north of SR 76 and immediately west of I-	181.2	Specific Plan Amendment for modification and construction of new recreation and resort-related facilities. Addition of 186 resort rooms and wedding facility. Expansion of resort by 6 acres.

TABLE 1 - Cumulatively Considerable Projects					
MAP KEY	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	ACRES	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
	121M10 MUP 04-005		15		
13	TPM 20440	Chipman TPM	East side Citrus Ln. btw. Peony Drive & Dos Ninos	13.54	Minor residential subdivision - 4 SFR lots plus one remainder lot ranging from 2.13 to 2.85 net acres each and remainder 4.00 net acres. Septic system.
16	TPM 20581	Treister TPM	Donut- shaped parcel surroundin g 401 Ranger Rd., Fallbrook	21.81	Minor residential subdivision 4 SFR lots plus one remainder lot.
17	TPM 20793 03-02-068	Mission Ridge Road TPM	235 Mission Ridge Road East of I-15 off Mission Rd.	19.55	Minor residential subdivision 4 SFR lots.
18	TM 5413	Rancho Alegre TPM	West side of Ranger Road approximat ely 0.4 miles north of Reche Road	70	Part of an 116 acre subdivision (33 lots). This project consists of 20 lots in the eastern portion of property and proposes a different street alignment, grading and lot arrangement.
20	TPM 20936	Fernandez TPM	3838 Foxglove Lane, Fallbrook	10.4	Minor residential subdivision. 4 SFR lots. Minimum lot size 2 acres. 2 existing SFR on site.
21	TPM 20944	Rabuchin TPM	4065 Calle Canonero, Fallbrook	9.91	Subdivision of 2 lots into 4 SFR lots. One existing SFR remains.

TABLE 1 - Cumulatively Considerable Projects					
MAP KEY	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	ACRES	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
23	MUP 87-021 P87-021 RPL2 RP87-001 RPL2	Rosemary's Mountain/ Palomar Aggregates Quarry	North side of SR 76, 1.25 miles east of I-15	96.4	Aggregate rock quarry and processing plants for concrete and asphalt. Approximately 22 million tons of rock would be mined over 20 years. Also, realignment of SR 76 from Project site west to I-15. Reclamation Plan to designate lower portion of site as water storage reservoir after completion of mining activities.
24	TPM 20542	Patapoff Minor Residential Subdivision	Southern end of Rainbow Hills Road	59.1	Subdivide property into four parcels of 4.3 acres, 4.2 acres, 9.6 acres, 8 acres, and a 33-acre parcel
26	NA	Palomar College North Education Center District Master Plan	East side of I-15 between Pankey Rd. and Pala Mesa Heights Dr.	85	New Community College campus to serve approximately 12,000 students, to include classroom and administration buildings, parking, open space, athletic fields, and off-site road, water and sewer improvements.
27	NA	Caltrans Realignment of SR 76	From I-15 to west of Rice Canyon Road	NA	Realignment and widening of roadway, improvements to northbound I-15 on- and off-ramps
28	NA	San Luis Rey Municipal Water District (SLRMWD) Water, Wastewater and Recycled Water	SLRMWD service area and vicinity, north and south of SR-76 between I-15 and Pala Temecula	Over 3,000	Exploration of pipeline and water storage options.

TABLE 1 - Cumulatively Considerable Projects					
MAP KEY	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	ACRES	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
		Master Plan	Road		
29	TM 5231 RPL4 MUP 00-034	Pala Mesa Subdivision	Canonita Drive and Old Hwy 395, Fallbrook	30.48	39 condo units
33	TM 5449	Fallbrook Oaks	Reche Road and Ranger Road, Fallbrook	26	19 SFR lots
47	TPM 20451	De Jong/Pala Minor Subdivision	Canonita Drive between I-15 and Tecalote Drive	5.62	Minor residential subdivision 3 SFR lots (1.03, 2.06 and 2.31 net acres each).
48	TPM 20800	Crossroads Investors Minor Subdivision	Ranger Road, Fallbrook	15.5	Minor residential subdivision 4 SFR lots plus one remainder lot. Existing SRF and grove on site.
49	TM 5217/5225 /5227/5228 MUP 00-027	Chaffin/Red Mountain Ranch Subdivisions	Rainbow Glen Road and Red Mountain Dam Road, Fallbrook	455.9	TM 5217: Residential development with 29 SFR lots (2.28 to 18.33 acres) and 2 biological open space zones. TM 5225: 55 acres divided into 6 SFR lots (8.1 to 13.9 acres). TM 5227: 44.5 acres divided into 4 SFR lots (8.08 to 13.71 acres each). TM 5228: 19.1 acres divided into 2 lots (8.4 and 10.7 acres).
52	TPM 20976	Dien N Do TPM	405 Ranger Road		4 SFR lots plus remainder lot
60	TM 5158; RPL3	Palisades Estates	3880 Dos Niños Rd/El	408.4	51 lots

TABLE 1 - Cumulatively Considerable Projects					
MAP KEY	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	ACRES	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
			evado Road		
81	TPM 21076	Sumac TPM	3111 Sumac Road		4 lots
82	S 03-024	Janikowski SFR	9686 Pala Rd. (SR 76), Fallbrook, on north side of SR 76	5.12	3,200 sf SFR
90	S 02-061	Pala Shopping Center	On Old Highway 395 just northwest of the intersection of I-15 and SR 76	3.88	Addition of 5 commercial buildings to an existing commercial site with grocery store.
91	TM 5489	Monserate TM	3624 Monserate Hill Road	24.6	7 SFR
92	TPM 21075	Dimitri, Diffendale, and Kirk TPM	Monserate Hill Road and Monserate Place		4 lots

## E. Conclusions

The proposed Project would change the composition of the visual environment in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity (Guideline No. 1) and would result in physical changes that would affect the viewshed of an identified scenic highway (Guideline No. 3). However, through project design measures including implementation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Furthermore the project would not result in physical changes that would substantially degrade the quality of an identified visual resource (Guideline No. 2).

All outdoor light fixtures would conform to the San Diego Light Pollution Code (Guideline No. 4), and highly reflective building materials would not be installed (Guideline No. 5).

Additionally, the project would meet all applicable policies and be consistent with relevant planning documents.

Most of the Project site is visible from some segments of northbound Old Highway 395 south of West Lilac Road. The visible portions of the Project would be primarily the multi-family and single family homes located below conserved agricultural groves. The changes to the visual environment associated with proposed on-site development would result in a change to the expansive views available to motorists and bicyclists from Old Highway 395; from a primarily open, largely undeveloped setting to one that is more suburban in nature. The visual environment in this area remains primarily open and rural despite the visible nearby developments, and the proposed Project would result in changes to the visual character of the area (Guideline No. 1). The proposed Project would change the continuity of the existing grove views of the site by introducing horizontal patterns of one- and two-story single family residential and multi-family residential structures onto undeveloped land. Site planning, architecture, and landscape guidelines required by the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment will combine to blend the project into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible. The result of this will be a Project that will not result in significant visual effects from the south or west.

Limited views toward the proposed Project would be available from the Monserate Mountain trail due to foreground grove plantings and intervening topography and slope plantings. Only limited views of the project are anticipated from this location and where views of the project are available proposed landscaping would soften the architecture and shield detailed views of buildings. This would lessen the impact created by the change to the view from undeveloped to developed. No major changes in dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity are anticipated as a result of the proposed Project (Guideline No. 1) that would result in physical changes that would degrade the quality of views available from the Monserate Mountain trail. No significant visual impacts are anticipated.

The proposed Project also would be visible from the trail within the Engle Family Preserve. Although the proposed Project landscaping would provide some screening of the buildings, the project would be visible, affecting the existing grove vegetation and resorting in discontinuity with the surrounding area and existing conditions. Although this would



introduce a major change to the visual character of the Project site, the lower valley would remain to a large degree undeveloped. The view from this trail is witnessed by a very small number of people due to the relatively hard-to-find location of the trail and preserve. Therefore **the proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts to views from the Engle Family Preserve.**

The proposed Project would meet the San Diego County Light Pollution Code requirements and not create significant glare from reflective building materials (Guidelines No. 4 and 5). The proposed Project would introduce ambient nighttime lighting that would become a visible element in the landscape of the I-15 corridor. This lighting would be consistent with low intensity residential lighting that exists west of I-15 and thus **would not result in significant visual impacts.**

Manufactured slopes within the project would result in physical changes in dominance and scale within the I-15 corridor viewshed. Erosion control plantings required by project design would effectively lower any adverse effect associated with these fill and cut slopes to less than significant levels. Following installation and establishment, these areas would receive long-term maintenance, as proposed by guidelines within the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment. This long-term maintenance will assure impacts associated with manufactured slopes would be less than significant.

The proposed Project would create a dominant pattern of elements within the I-15 viewshed that would degrade the continuity of the grove areas of the Monserate Mountain foothills. Although the proposed Project buildings would not rise above the horizon line created by the background mountain ranges, the development would change the character of the visual environment within the I-15 corridor by introducing dominant visual elements that would be fairly extensive in scale and will break up the green patterns of groves in the project vicinity. These adverse impacts will be reduced through implementation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment, which establishes guidelines for development that will minimize contrast with the existing visual setting and community character. Over time the project will be integrated into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible through landscaping and screening to buffer the project from view and create interruptions in the horizontal pattern of development. As the canopy of vegetation develops it will increasingly relate in color, form, texture and line, with the patterns of the existing hillsides and agricultural groves. These physical changes, as a result, would not adversely affect the viewshed of the I-15 corridor, a state Eligible Scenic Highway and County Third Priority Scenic Route (Guideline No. 3). Therefore, **the proposed Project would not result in significant adverse visual impacts to views from I-15.**

Short-term visible construction activities, typical of projects of this nature, would contrast with existing conditions due to removal of existing vegetation and the introduction of new, visually dominant elements, including raw soil, newly cut or filled slopes, construction period fencing, construction equipment, and construction materials stockpiling and storage. **While temporary in nature and addressed through project design landscaping over the long-term, short-term adverse visual impacts would be significant.** (Guidelines No. 1 and 3)

The proposed Meadowood project and the surrounding proposed projects assessed for cumulative effects would be visible from I-15 (a scenic highway) and area roadways and trails. The scale of the neighboring proposed projects would create major physical changes in the composition of the visual environment that would be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the area. As a result, the visual environment of the I-15 corridor viewshed in this area would be adversely affected, and the cumulative visual impacts would be significant. (Guidelines No. 1 and 3). Additionally, the proposed projects would comprise a major element within the view from the Engle Family Preserve and from the Monserate Mountain trails. The proposed cumulative projects would extend highway commercial and suburban elements into surrounding hillsides and adjacent undeveloped/agricultural lots. **The overall effect would result in physical changes degrading the open, undeveloped views from these trails, thereby creating a significant cumulative visual impact.**

As noted earlier, on a project-specific level, proposed Project landscaping would help to reduce the visual impacts created by the proposed Project by visually screening parking lots, buildings, and lighting. Trees and shrubs planted on slopes will reduce the scale and dominance of the newly graded slopes and will ultimately serve to screen much of the project from view. These features reduce the dominance of the proposed Project features to **below a level of significance.**

**Impacts to visual resources associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Project would be significant in the short term, but reduced to less than significant in the long-term through project design measures including implementation of the Meadowood Specific Plan Amendment.** (Guidelines Nos. 1 and 3)

**The composition of the project viewshed will be adversely affected by major physical changes introduced by cumulatively considerable projects. These changes will be incompatible with the existing visual character of the area and therefore the cumulative visual impacts would be significant and unmitigable.** (Guidelines No. 1 and 3)

## IV. References

### County of San Diego

- 1974 Fallbrook Community Plan. December 31, as amended.
- Interstate-15 Corridor Subregional Plan.
- 1988 Interstate-15/Highway 76 Interchange Master Specific Plan. June 1.
- 1986 San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances. Light Pollution Code.
- Section 59.101 et seq. Chapter 9—
- 2007 Resource Protection Ordinance of San Diego County. October 10.
- 1975 Amended 1986 Scenic Highways Element. San Diego County General Plan.

### Fallbrook Land Conservancy

- 2005 Fallbrook Preserves. [www.sdccc.org/flc/preserves/preserves.htm](http://www.sdccc.org/flc/preserves/preserves.htm)

### Other

- 2008 Draft Visual Impact Analysis for Campus Park Development Project / PAS-01.
- Helix Environmental Planning, Inc.

## V. List of Preparers

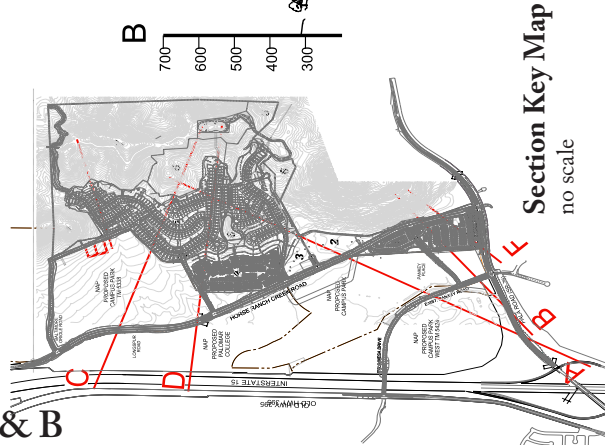
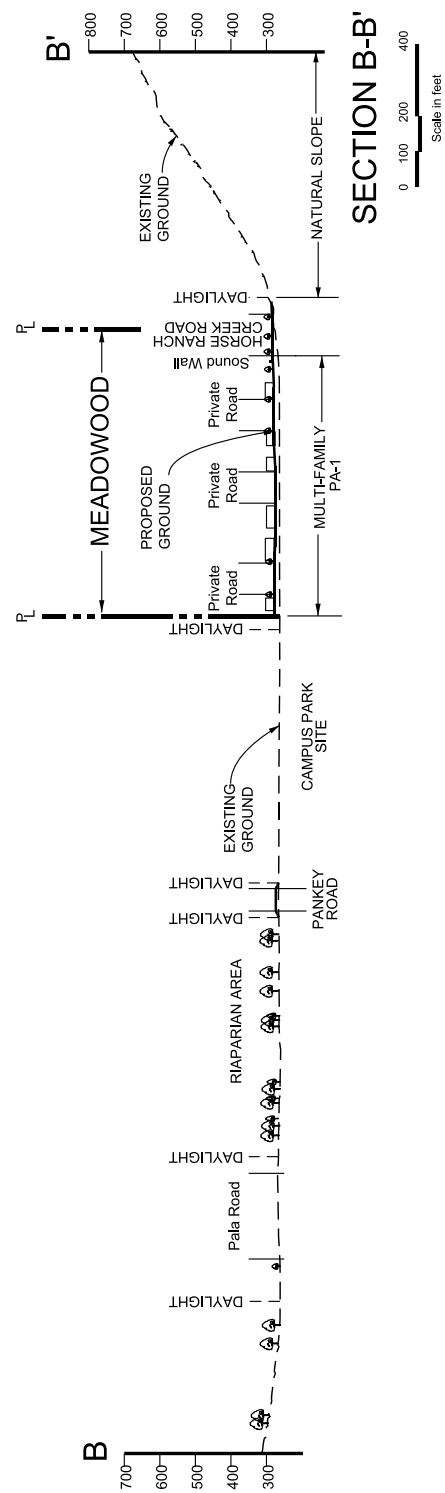
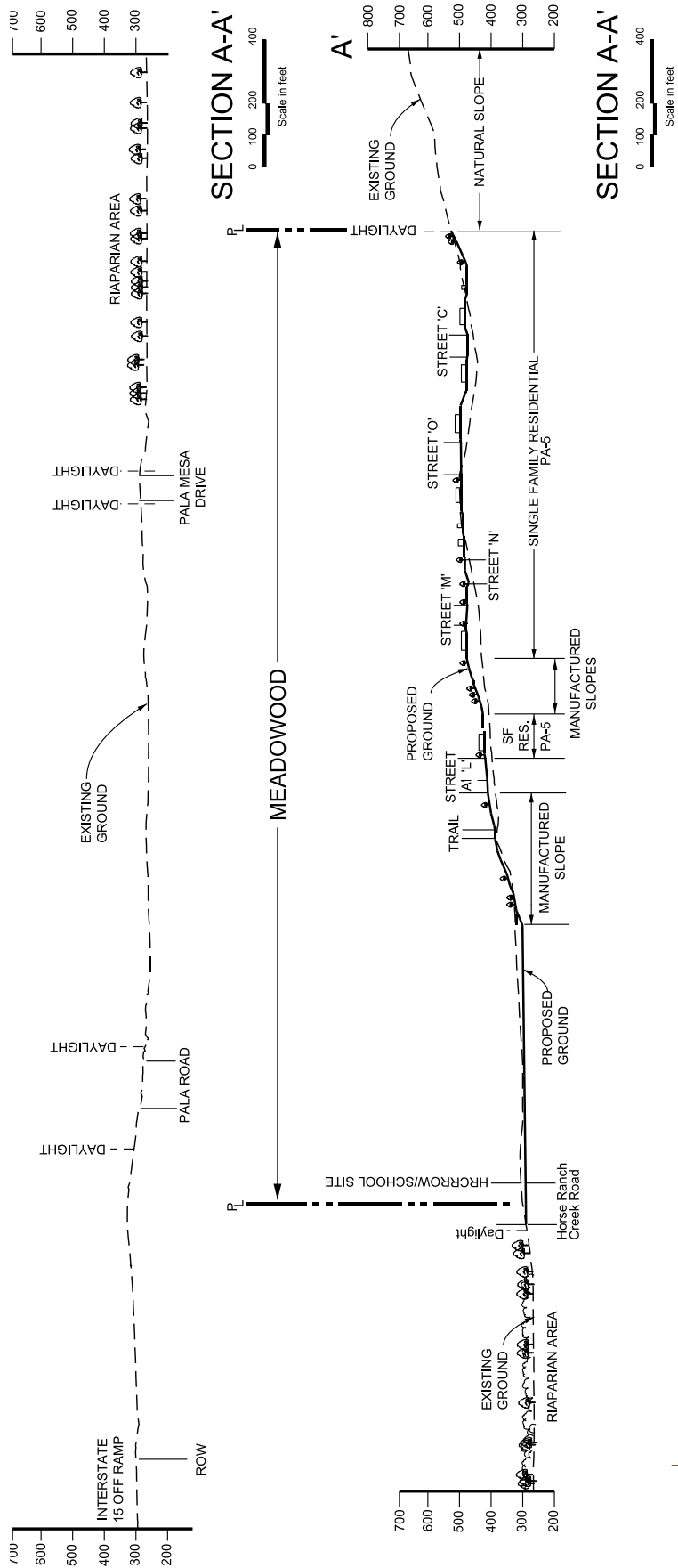
This report was prepared by Adam Gevanthor at Development Design Services & GraphicAccess, Inc. for:

RECON Environmental, Inc.

1927 Fifth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101  
P (619) 308-9333  
F (619) 308-9334

Adam Gevanthor, Principal. R.L.A. #3393. B.S.L.A., California State Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo (1983).

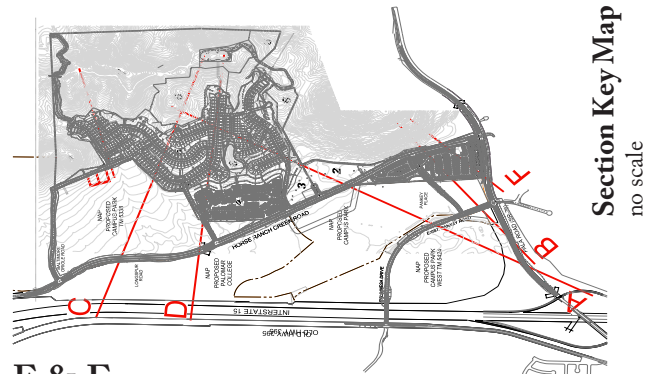
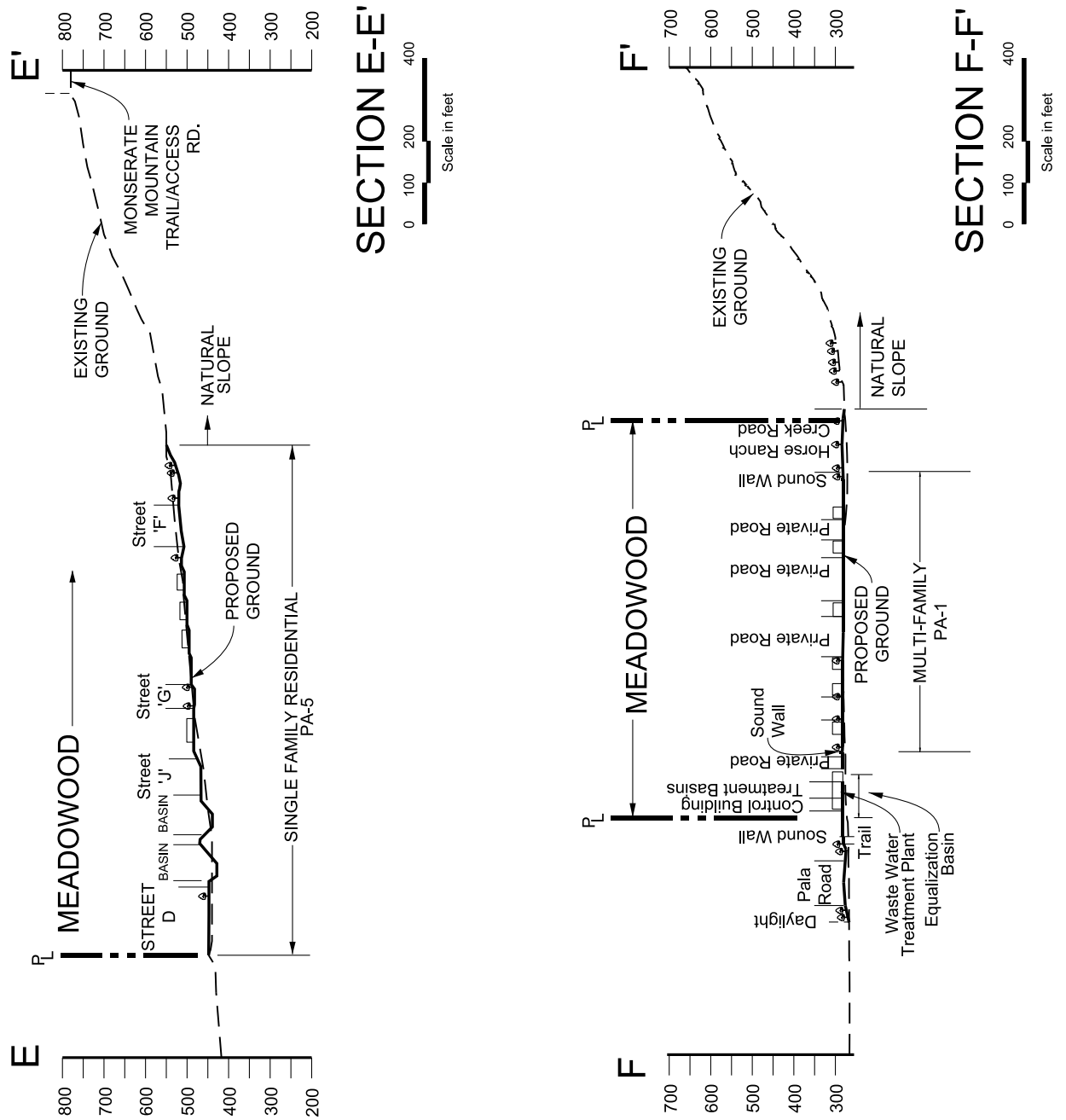
Development Design Services & GraphicAccess, Inc.  
2583 Via Merano  
Del Mar, CA 9201  
P (858) 793.5450  
F (858) 793.5452



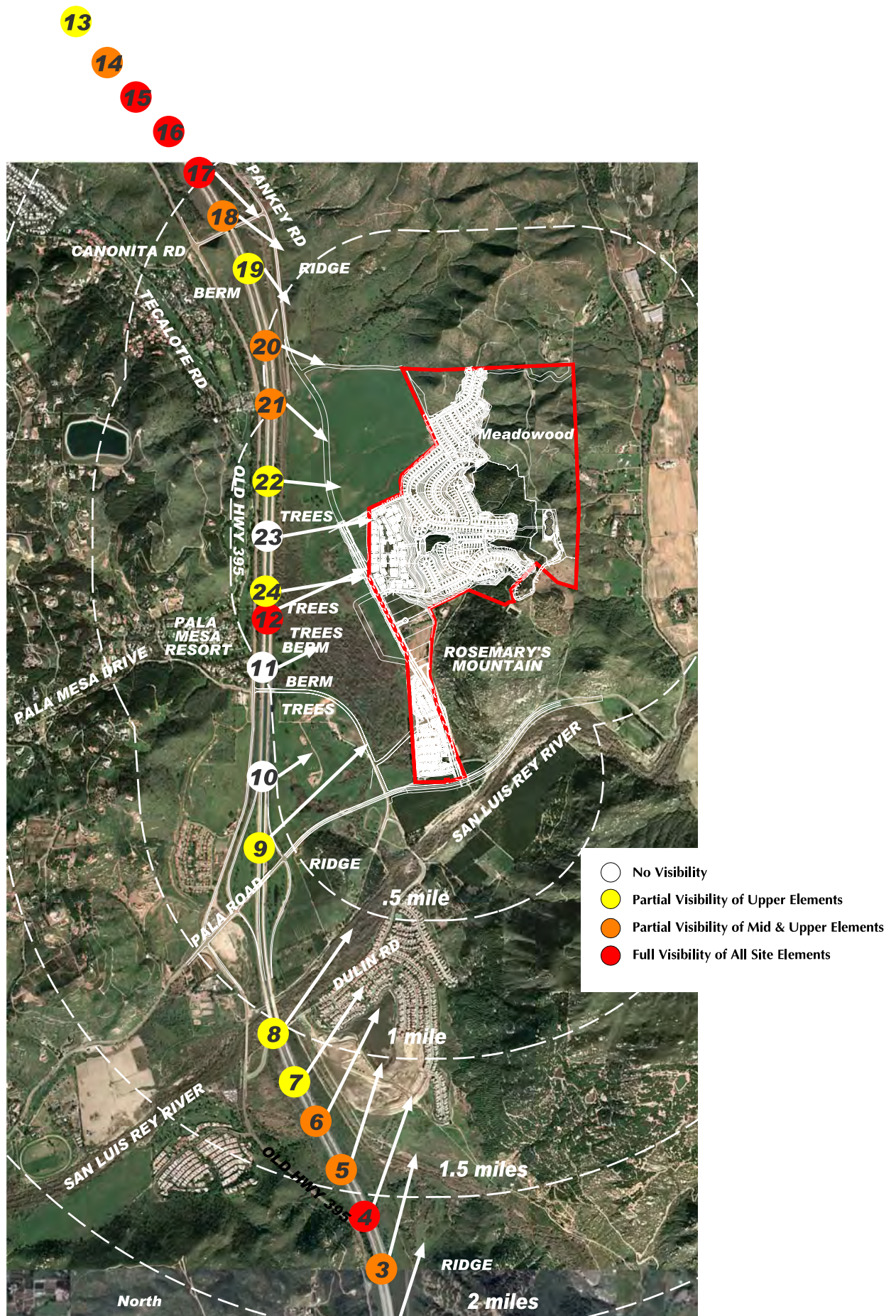
**Cross Sections A & B**



## Cross Section E & F





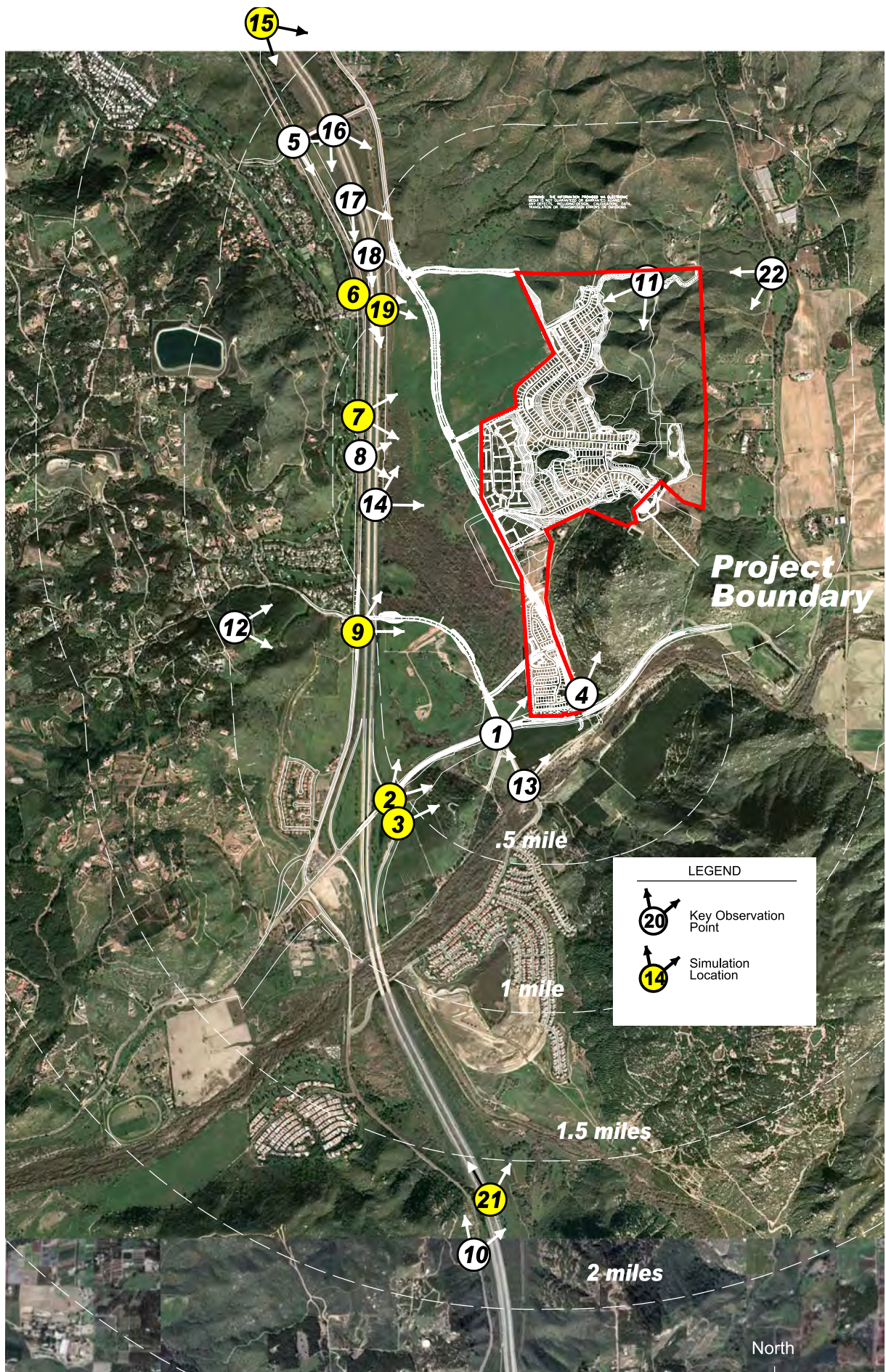


## Interstate 15 Project Visibility

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 17





## Key Observation Points





KOP 1 - View from a location on Pala Road near the future Pankey Road intersection, approximately 750' from project.



KOP 2 - View looking northeast from the I-15/Pala Road (SR 76) interchange approximately 1,800' from project.

## Key Observation Points (KOP) 1 & 2





## Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 2

Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Source: VisionScape Imagery

Figure 20





KPO 3 - View from a location on the south bound off-ramp of Pala Road and I-15 looking northeast approximately 1,800' from project.



KOP 4 - Looking north from the future Horse Ranch Creek Road/Pala Road (SR 76) intersection

## Key Observation Points 3 & 4



EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED CONDITION

Note: Trees shown 22'-24' in height representing, from time of installation, approximately 3-5 years of growth under optimum conditions.



Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 3





KOP 5 - View from intersection of Old Hwy. 395 and Canonita Dr., approximately 1 mile northwest of project.



KOP 6 - View looking east from a location near the Pala Mesa Resort entry and I-15, approximately 3,187' from project.

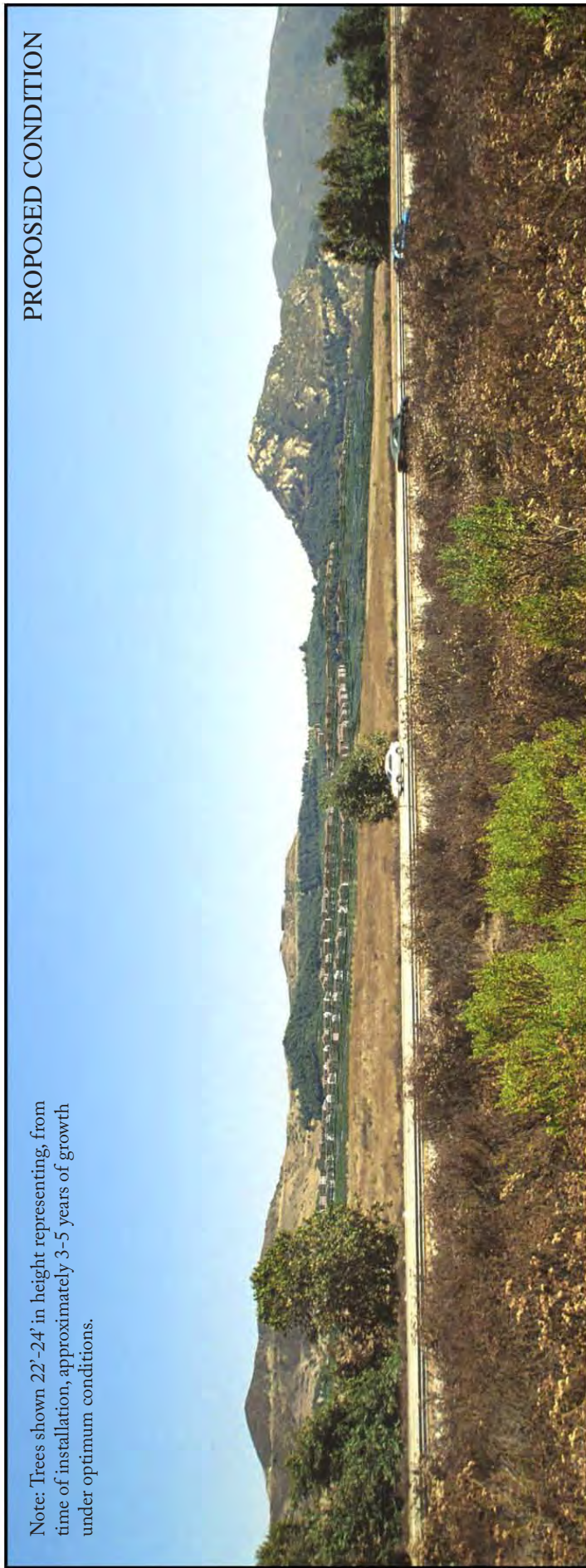
## Key Observation Points 5 & 6



EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED CONDITION



Note: Trees shown 22'-24' in height representing, from time of installation, approximately 3-5 years of growth under optimum conditions.

Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 6

Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Source: VisionScape Imagery

Figure 24





KOP 7 - View from Old Hwy. 395 looking east from a location approximately 2,625' west of project.



KOP 8 - View from a location on Old Hwy. 395 looking east from a location approximately 2,250' west of project.

## Key Observation Points 7 & 8

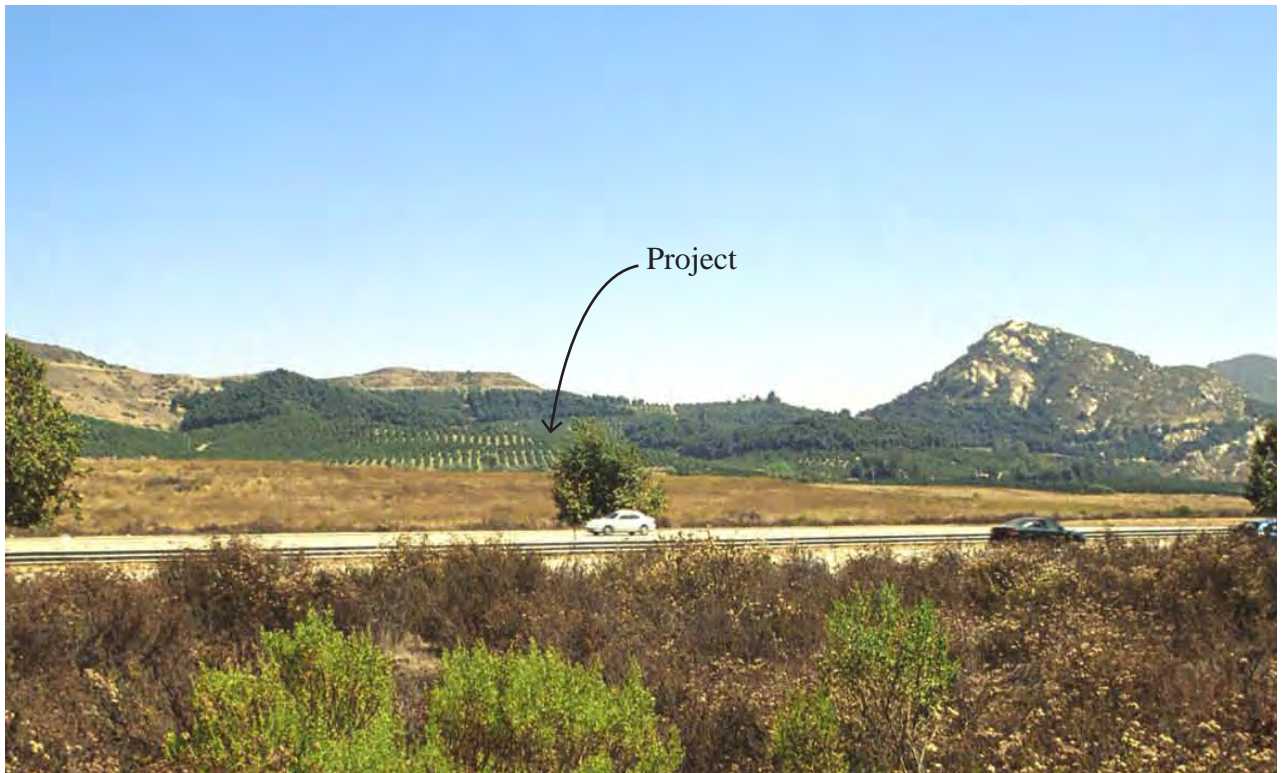




Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 7

Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.





KOP 9 - View from Old Hwy. 395 looking east from a location near Pala Mesa Drive, approximately 3000' from project.



KOP 10 - View from Old Hwy 395 near the West Lilac Road intersection approximately 1.9 miles from project.

## Key Observation Points 9 & 10



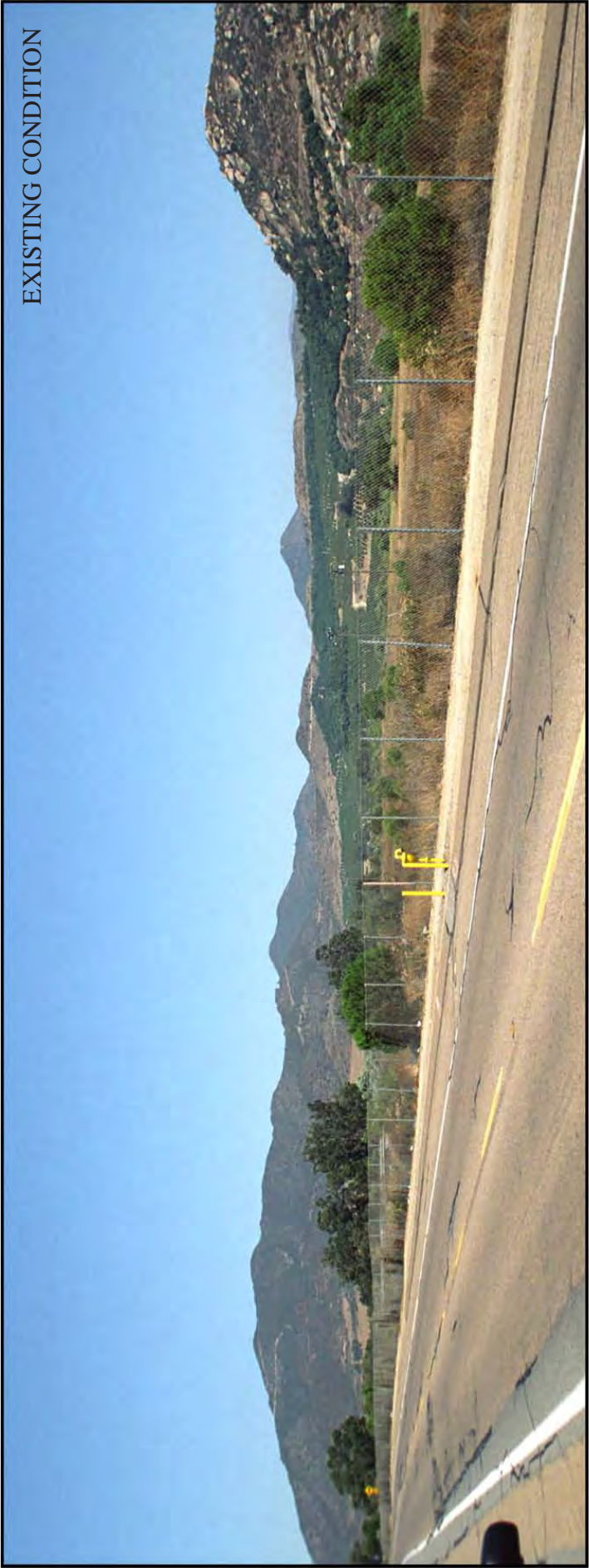


Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 9

Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.





KOP 11 - View southwest from a location on the Monserate Mountain Trail.



KOP 12 - View looking east from the Engle Family Preserve, approximately 1 mile from project.

## Key Observation Points 11 & 12



KOP 13 - View from future location of San Luis Rey River Trail, approximately 1,125' from project.



KOP 14 - View looking east across roadside riparian area, approximately 1,875' west of project.

### Key Observation Points 13 & 14





KOP 15 - View southbound on I-15, north of Canonita Dr., approximately 1.2 miles from project.



KOP 16 - View from southbound I-15 near Canonita Dr., approximately .8 miles from project.

## Key Observation Points 15 & 16

EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED CONDITION



Note: Trees shown 22'-24' in height representing, from time of installation, approximately 3-5 years of growth under optimum conditions.

## Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 15

Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Source: VisionScape Imagery

Figure 32





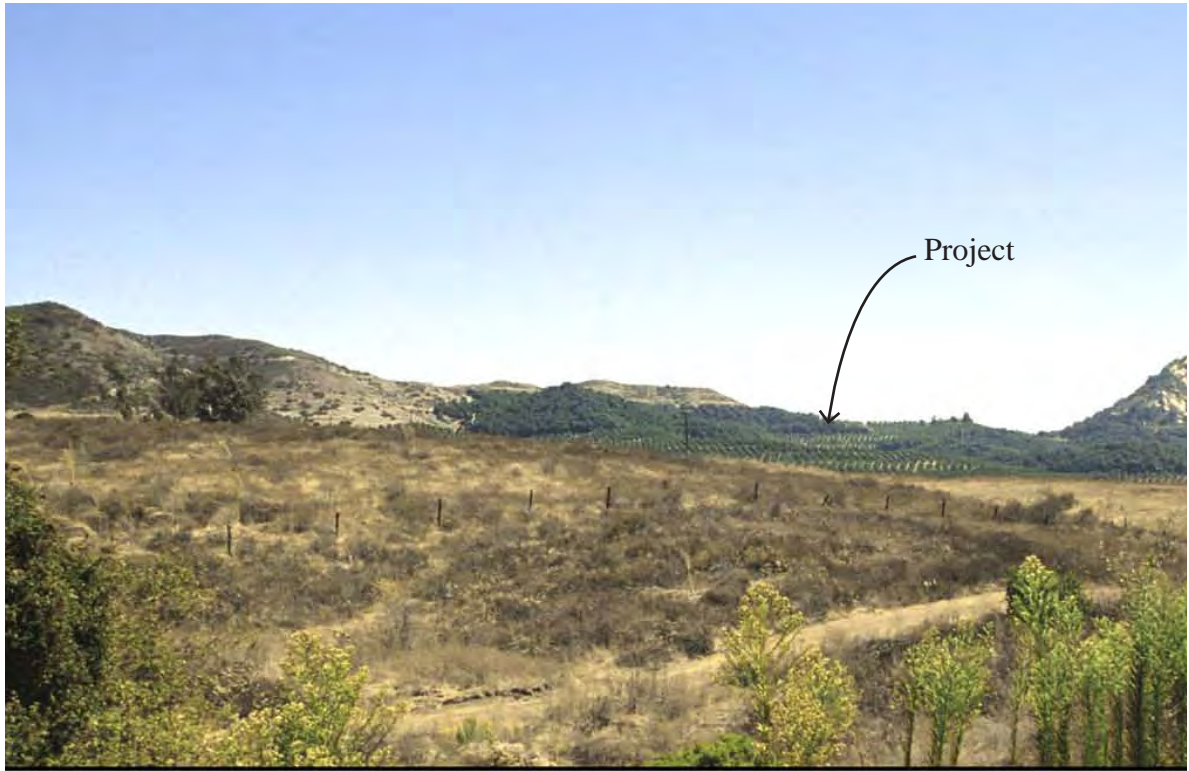
KOP 17 - View from southbound I-15 looking east toward project from a location approximately .9 miles from site.



KOP 18 - View from southbound I-15 from a location roughly in line with northern project boundary, approximately 3,750' from site.

### Key Observation Points 17 & 18





KOP 19 - View looking southeast from the terminus of Pankey Road, south of Canonita Rd., approximately 2,214' from site.

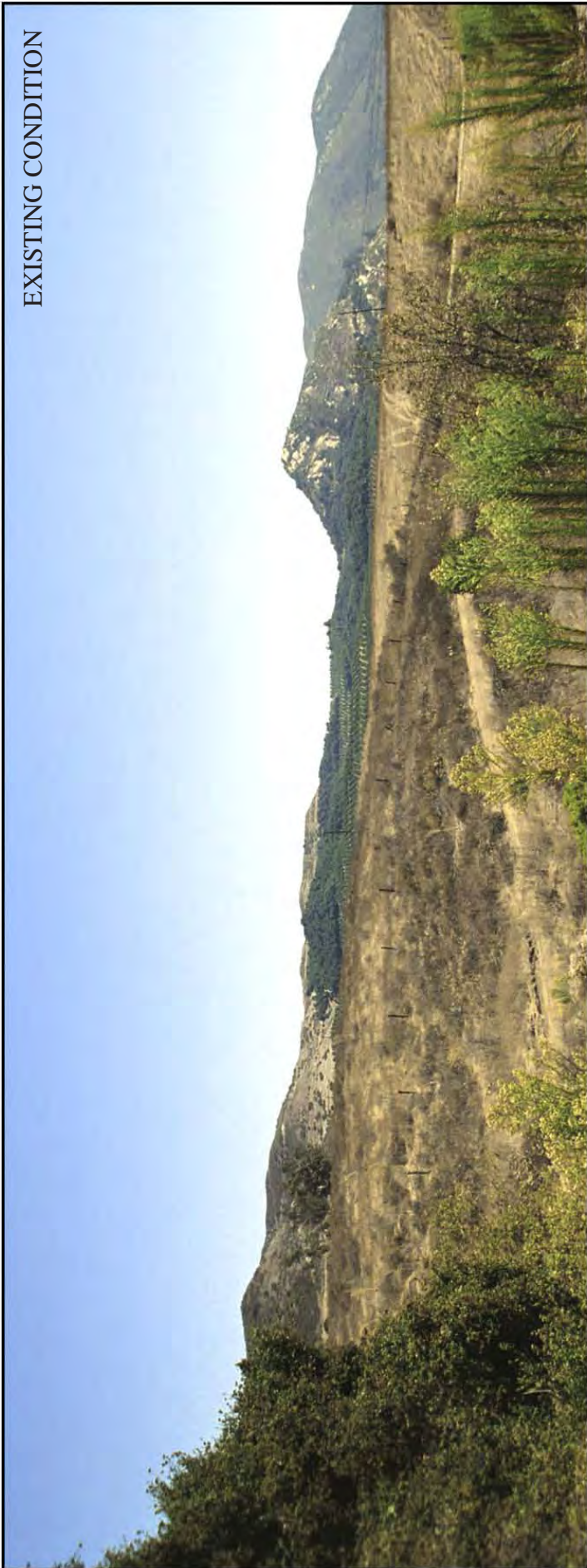


KOP 20 - View from northbound I-15 near Lilac Road, approximately 2.4 miles from project.

## Key Observation Points 19 & 20



EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED CONDITION



Note: Trees shown 22'-24' in height representing, from time of installation, approximately 3-5 years of growth under optimum conditions.

## Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 19

Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Source: VisionScape Imagery

Figure 35





KOP 21 - View from northbound I-15 north of Lilac Road, approximately 2 miles from project.



KOP 22 - View from the intersection of Rice Canyon Road and Pala Mesa Heights Drive looking southwest toward location of proposed water storage tanks and access road.

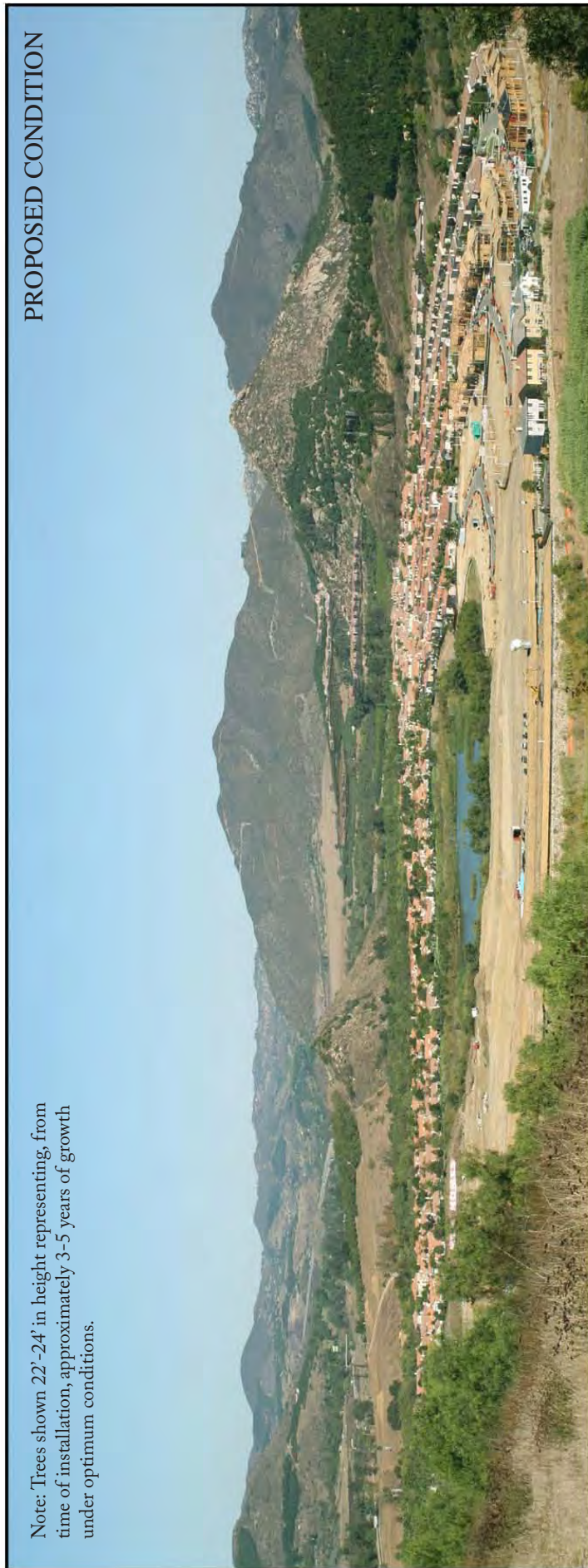
## Key Observation Points 21 & 22



EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED CONDITION



Note: Trees shown 22'-24' in height representing, from time of installation, approximately 3-5 years of growth under optimum conditions.

Photo Simulation - Key Observation Point 21

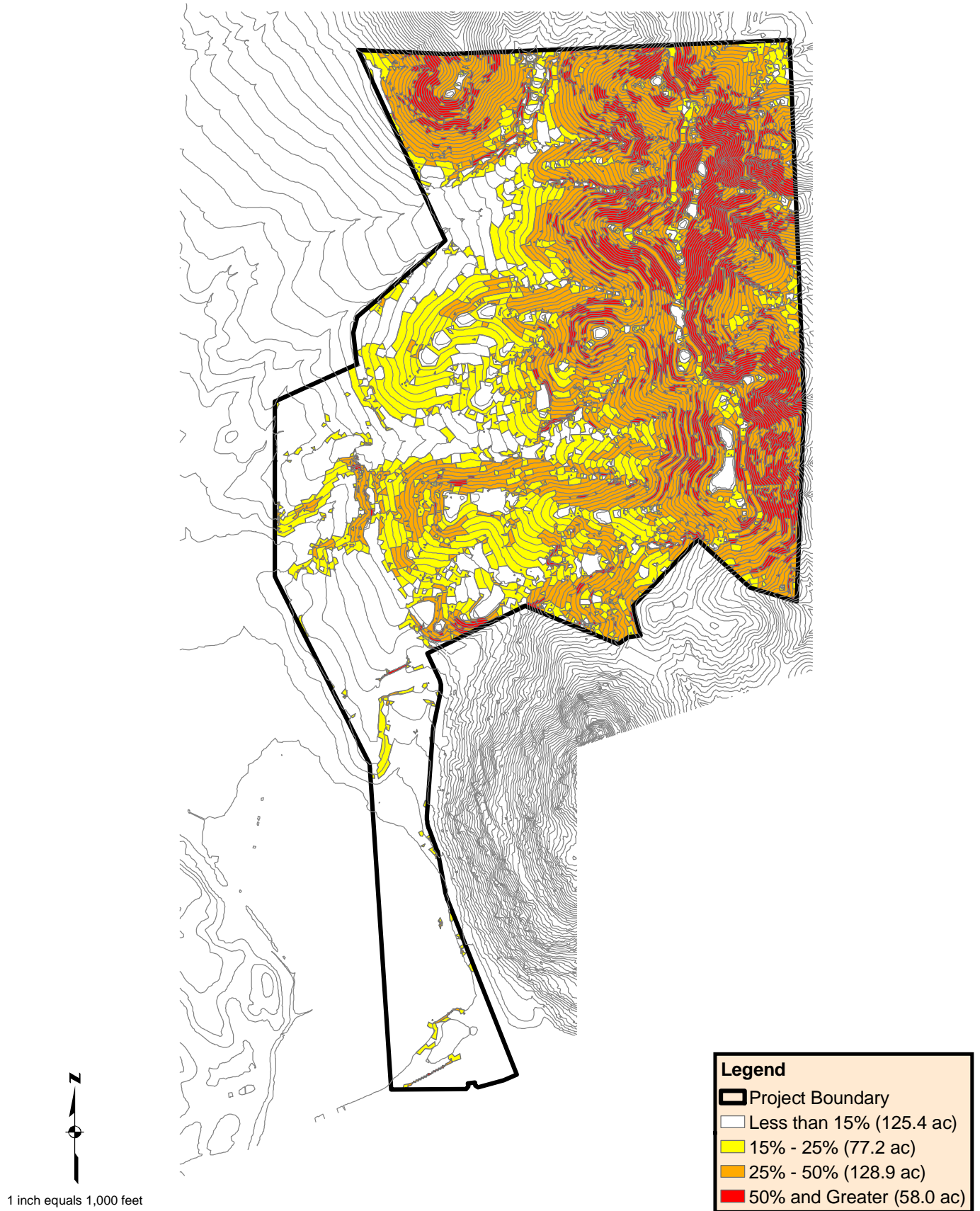
Note: These simulations represent approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

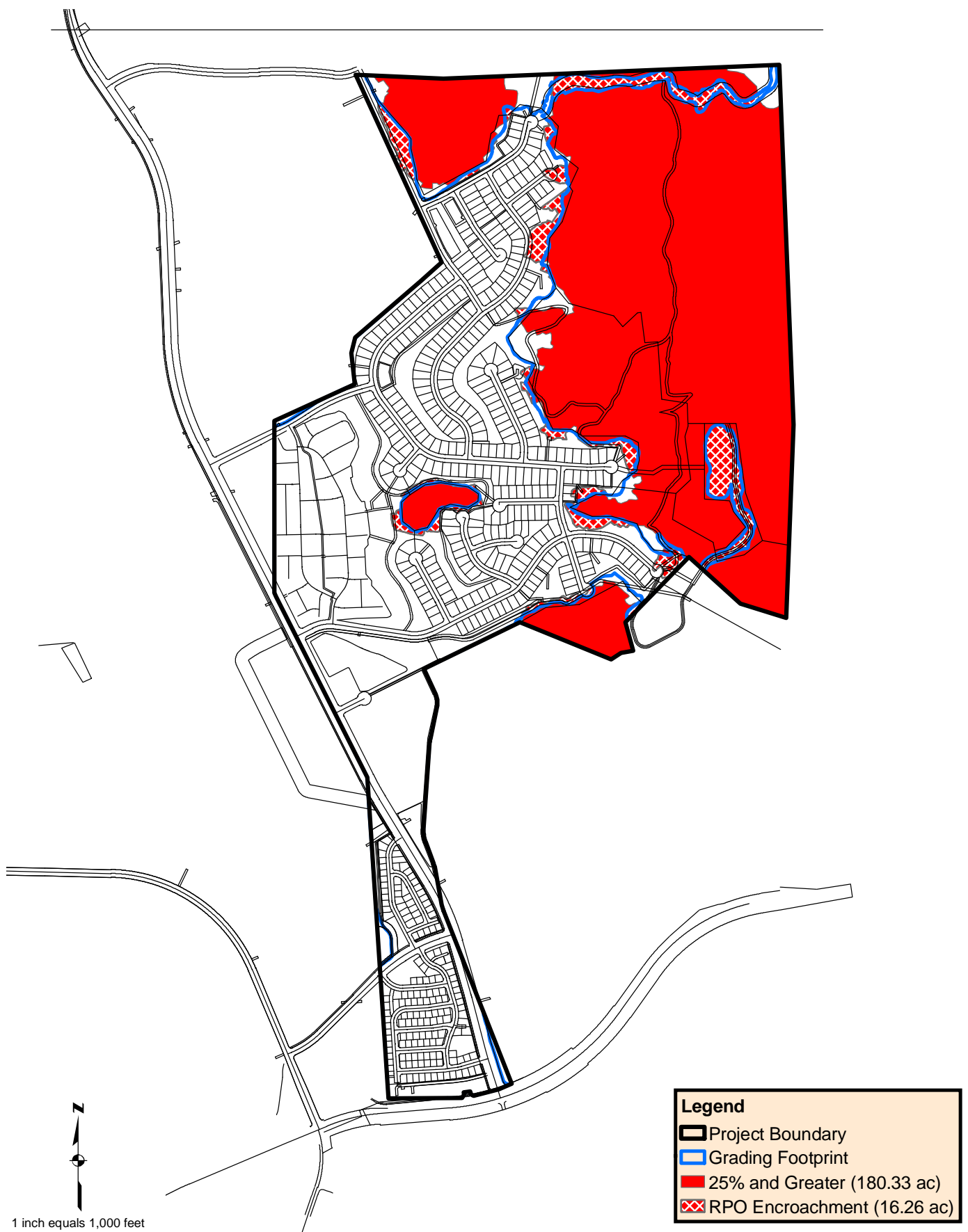
Source: VisionScape Imagery

Figure 37

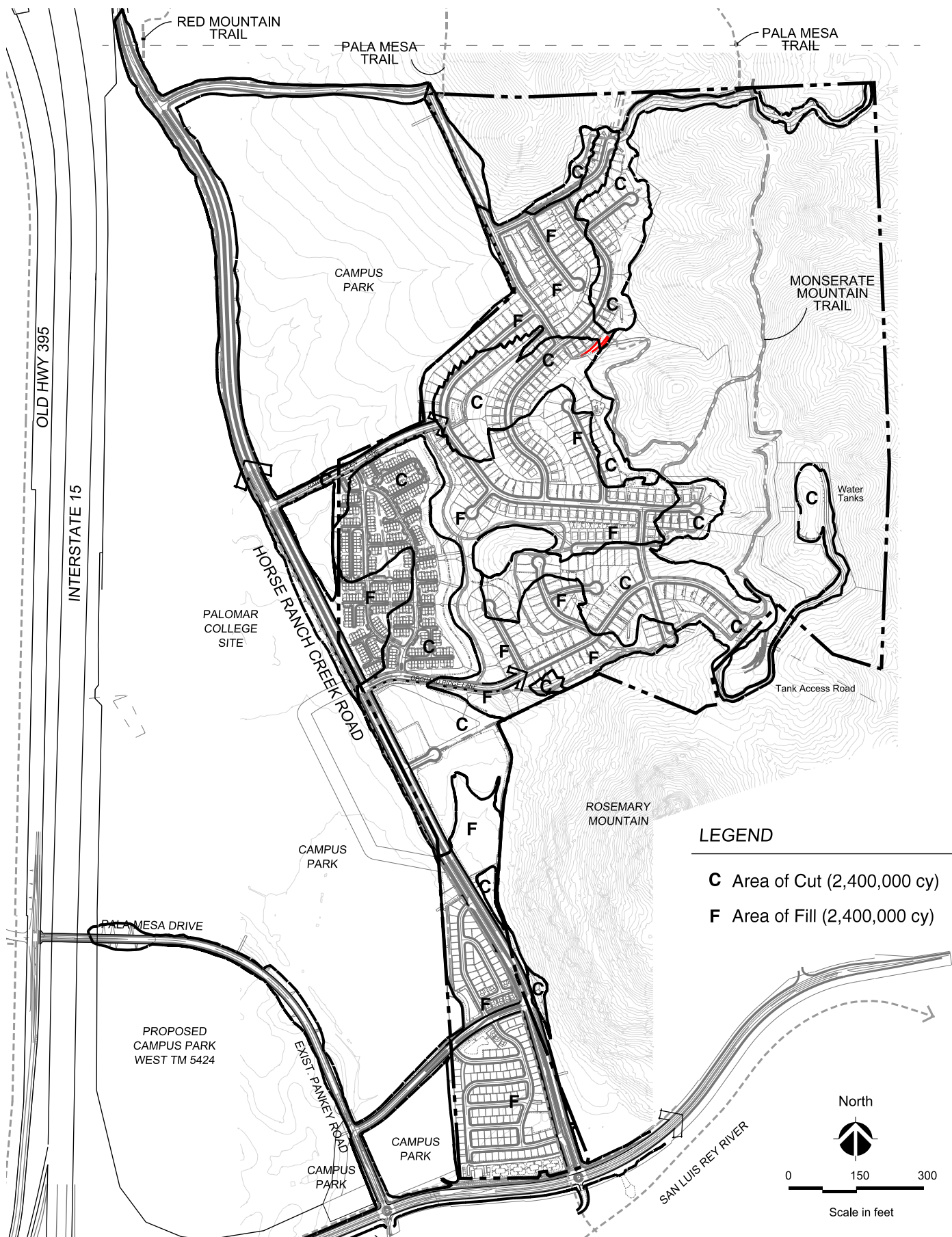




## Steep Slopes

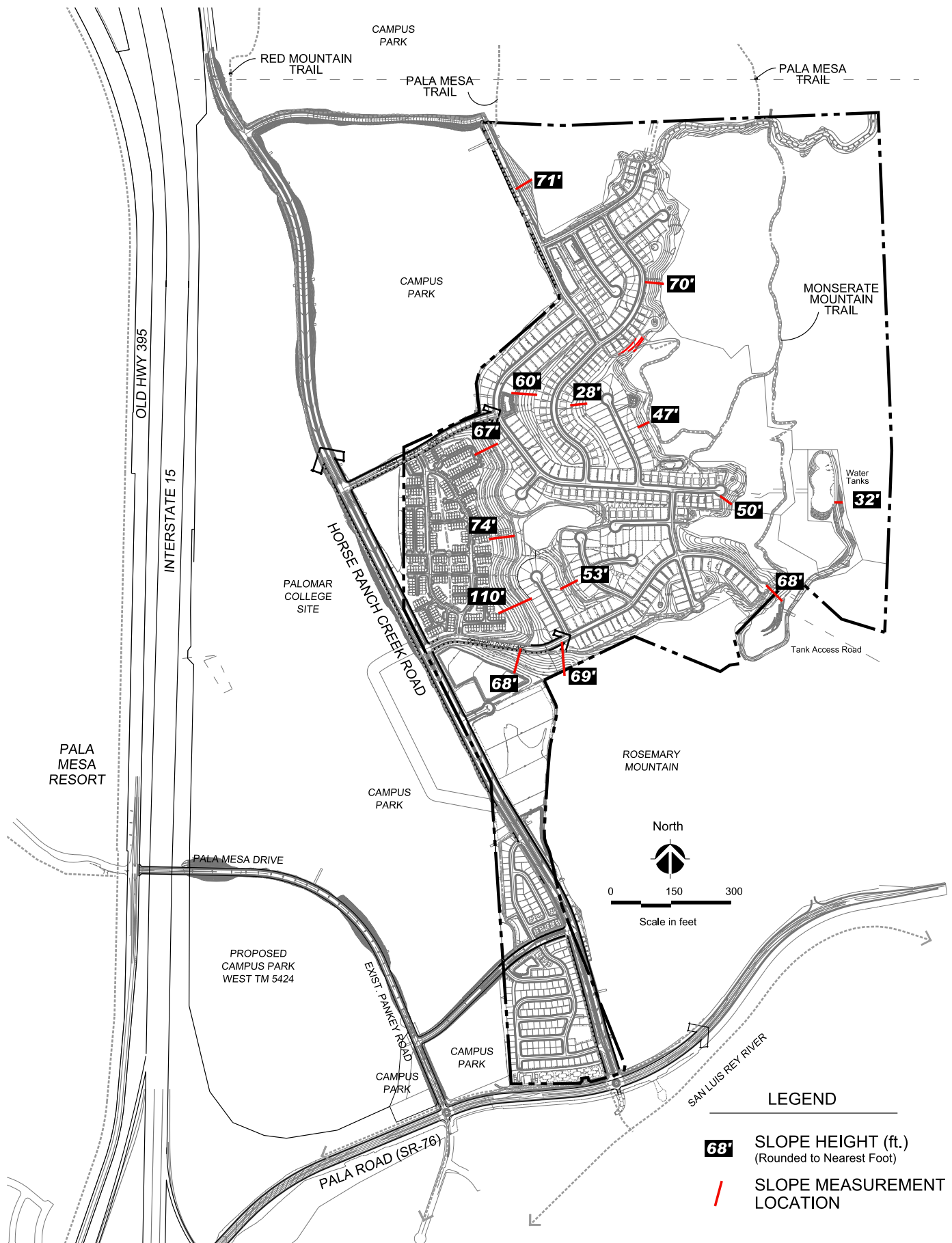


## RPO Encroachment

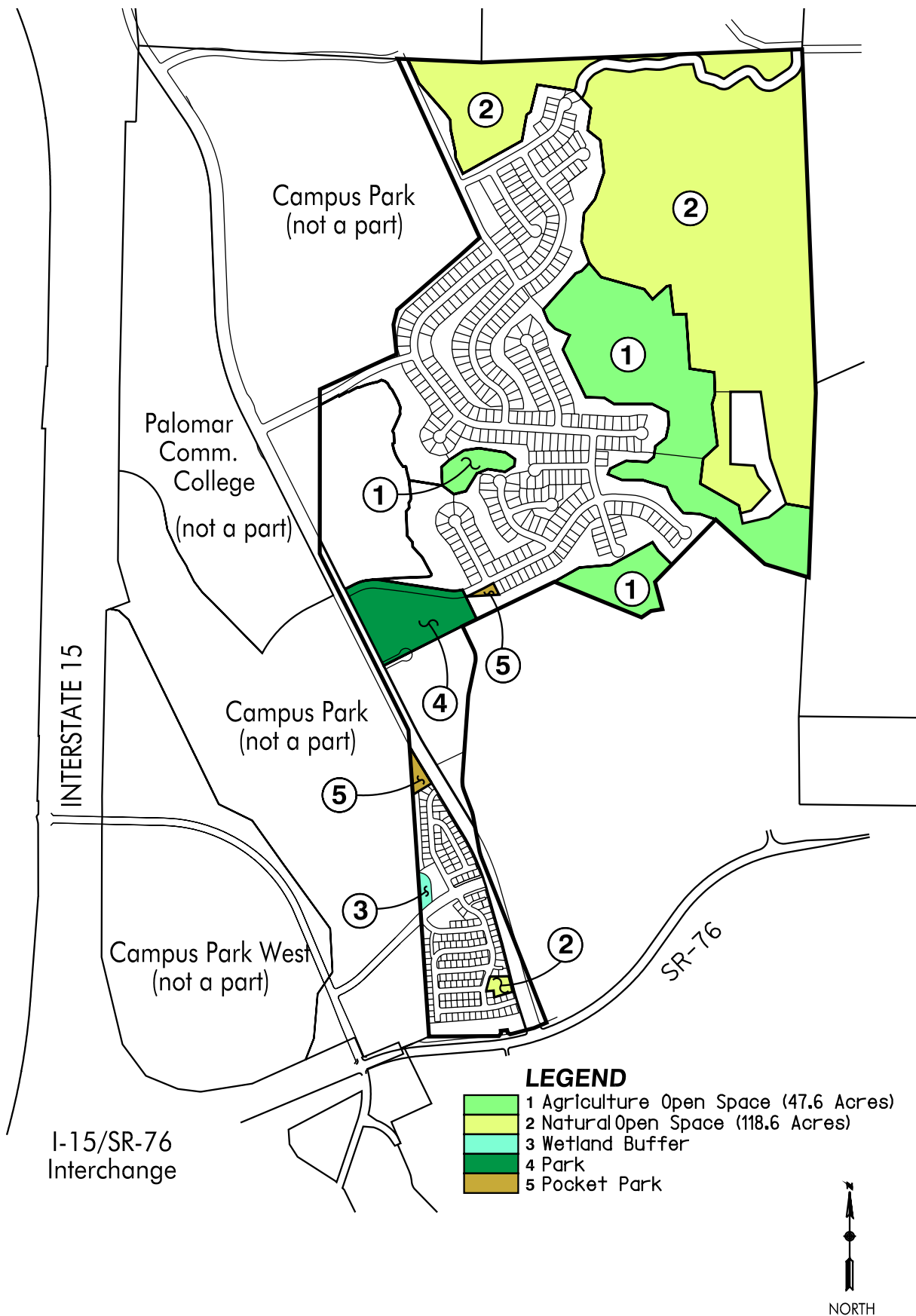


## Cut & Fill





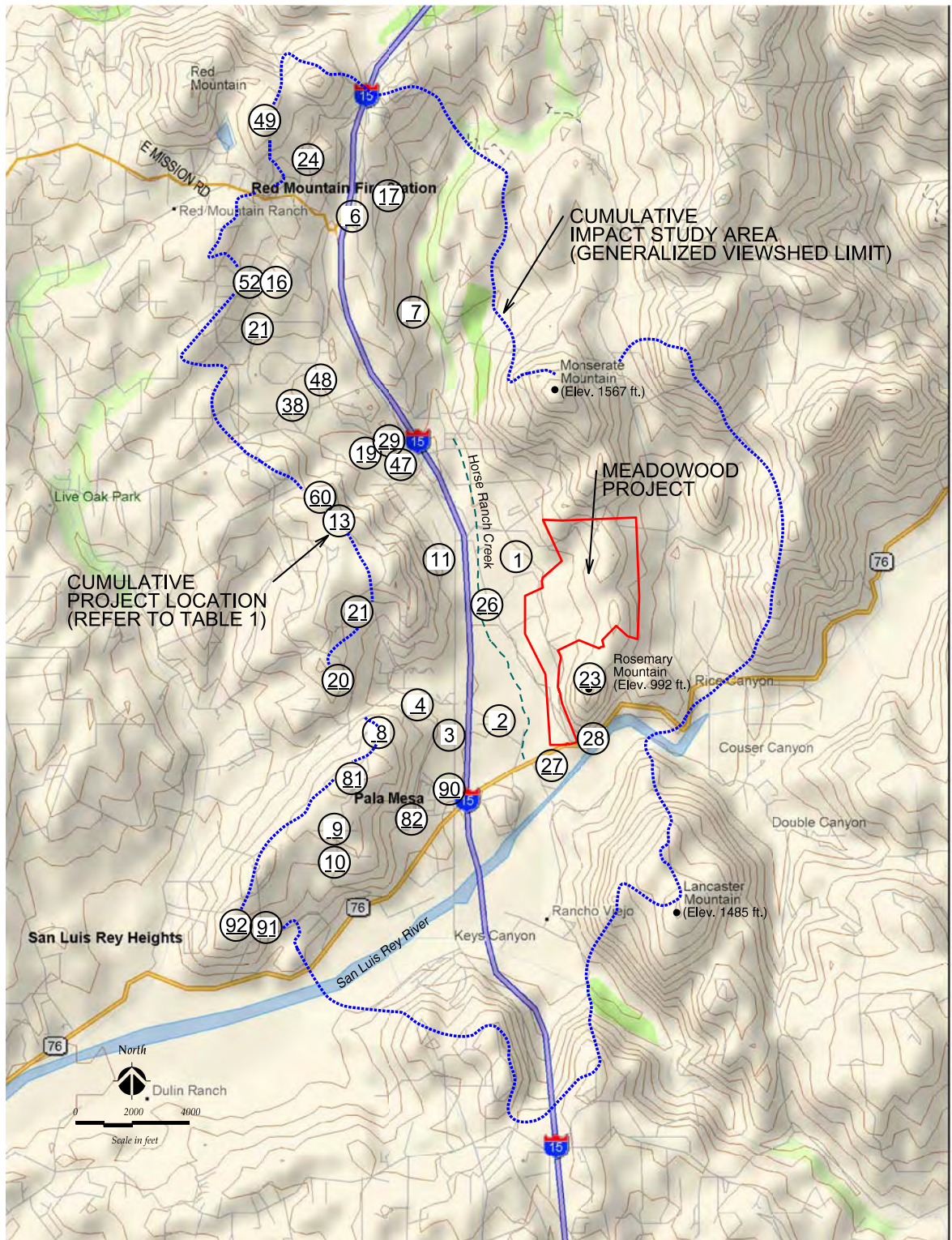
## Slope Heights



This exhibit is intended for the sole use of Pardee Homes as a visual aid. This exhibit should not be relied on as an accurate representation of existing and future development or land uses. For current information regarding development within this area, consult the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use or other appropriate governing agency exercising jurisdiction or control over the subject matter of the inquiry.

## Open Space





## County Cumulative Projects

Meadowood Project - Visual Impact Assessment Technical Study

Figure 43